THE NEW MUTANTS CLASSIC

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THE NEW MUTANTS

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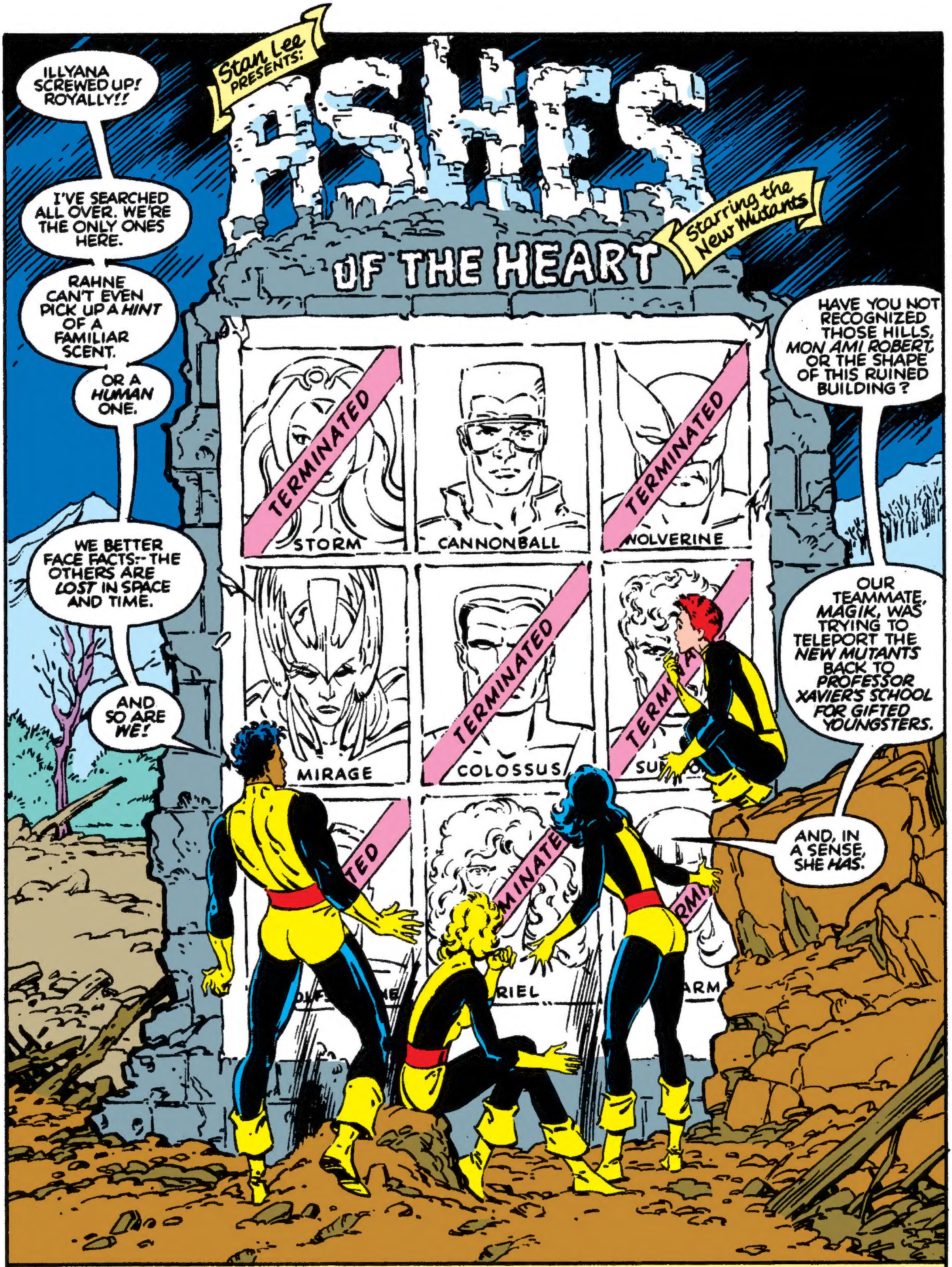
Stan Lee PRESENTS:
ASHES OF THE HEART
Starring the New Mutants
ILLYANA SCREWED UP! ROYALLY!!
I'VE SEARCHED ALL OVER. WE'RE THE ONLY ONES HERE.
RAHNE CAN'T EVEN PICK UP A *HINT* OF A FAMILIAR SCENT.
OR A *HUMAN* ONE.
WE BETTER FACE FACTS:- THE OTHERS ARE *LOST* IN SPACE AND TIME.
AND SO ARE *WE!*
HAVE YOU NOT RECOGNIZED THOSE HILLS, *MON AMI ROBERT,* OR THE SHAPE OF THIS RUINED BUILDING?
OUR TEAMMATE, *MAGIK,* WAS TRYING TO TELEPORT THE *NEW MUTANTS* BACK TO *PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.*
AND, IN A SENSE, SHE *HAS.*
TERMINATED
STORM
CANNONBALL
TERMINATED
WOLVERINE
MIRAGE
TERMINATED
COLOSSUS
TERMINATED
TERMINATED

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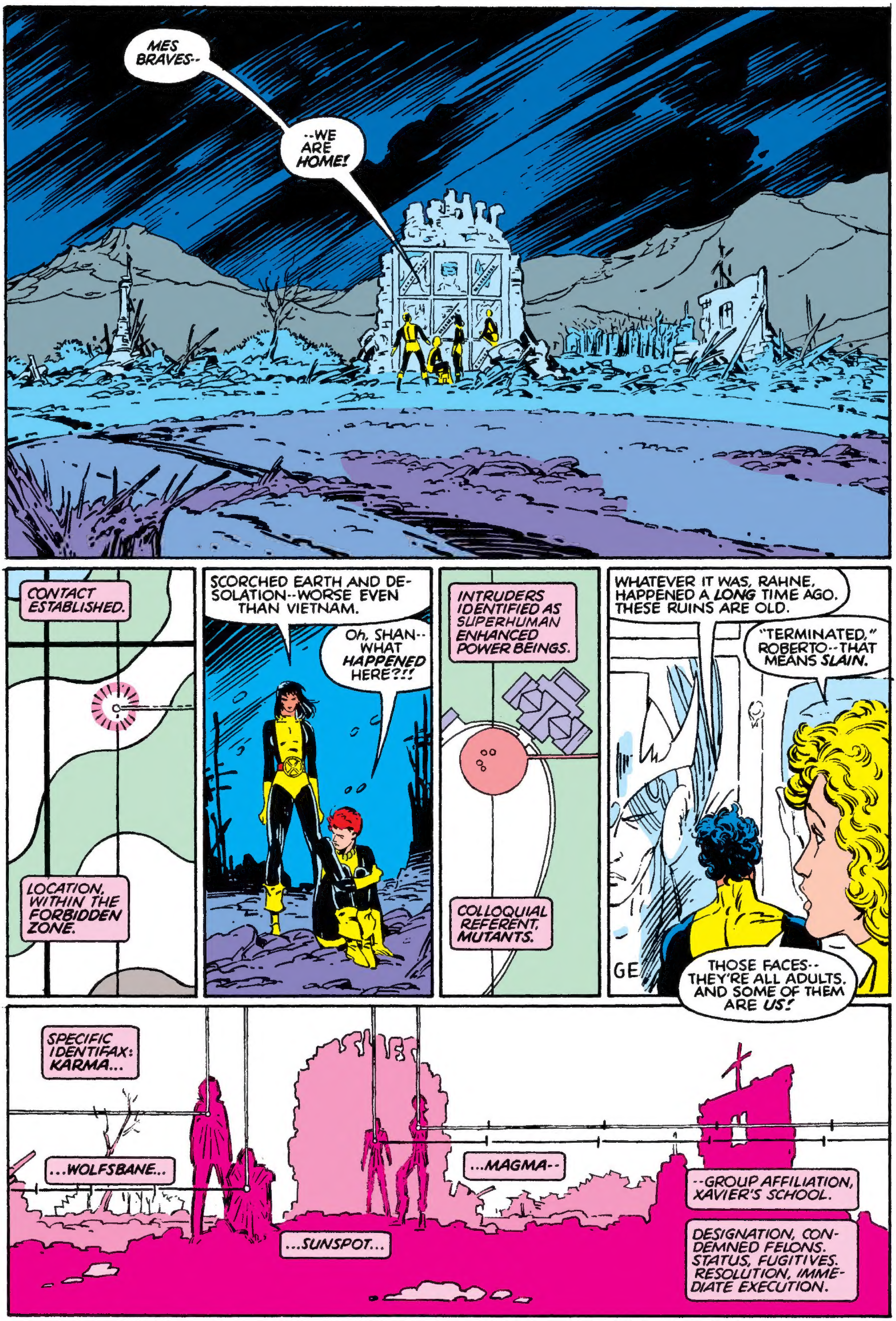
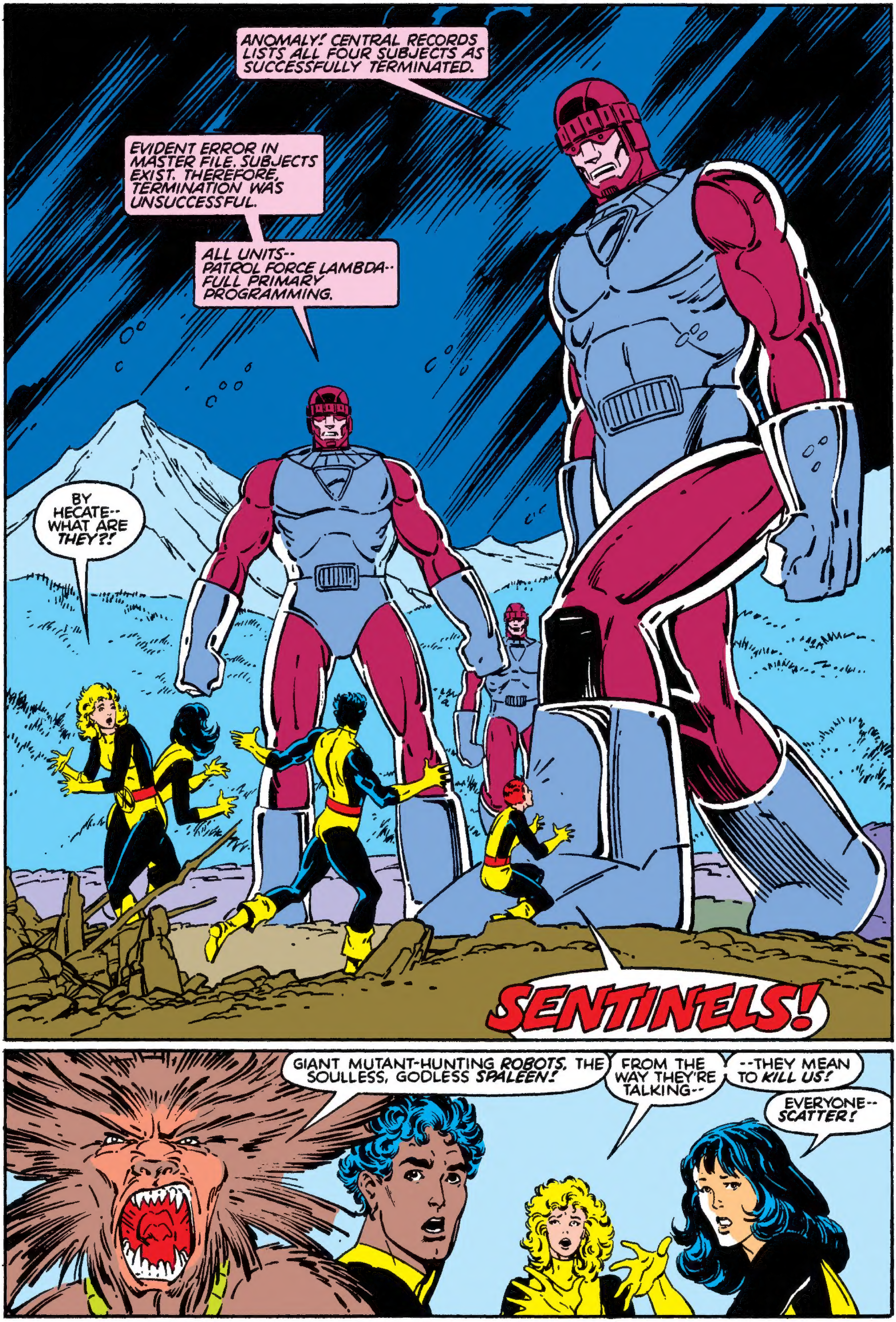
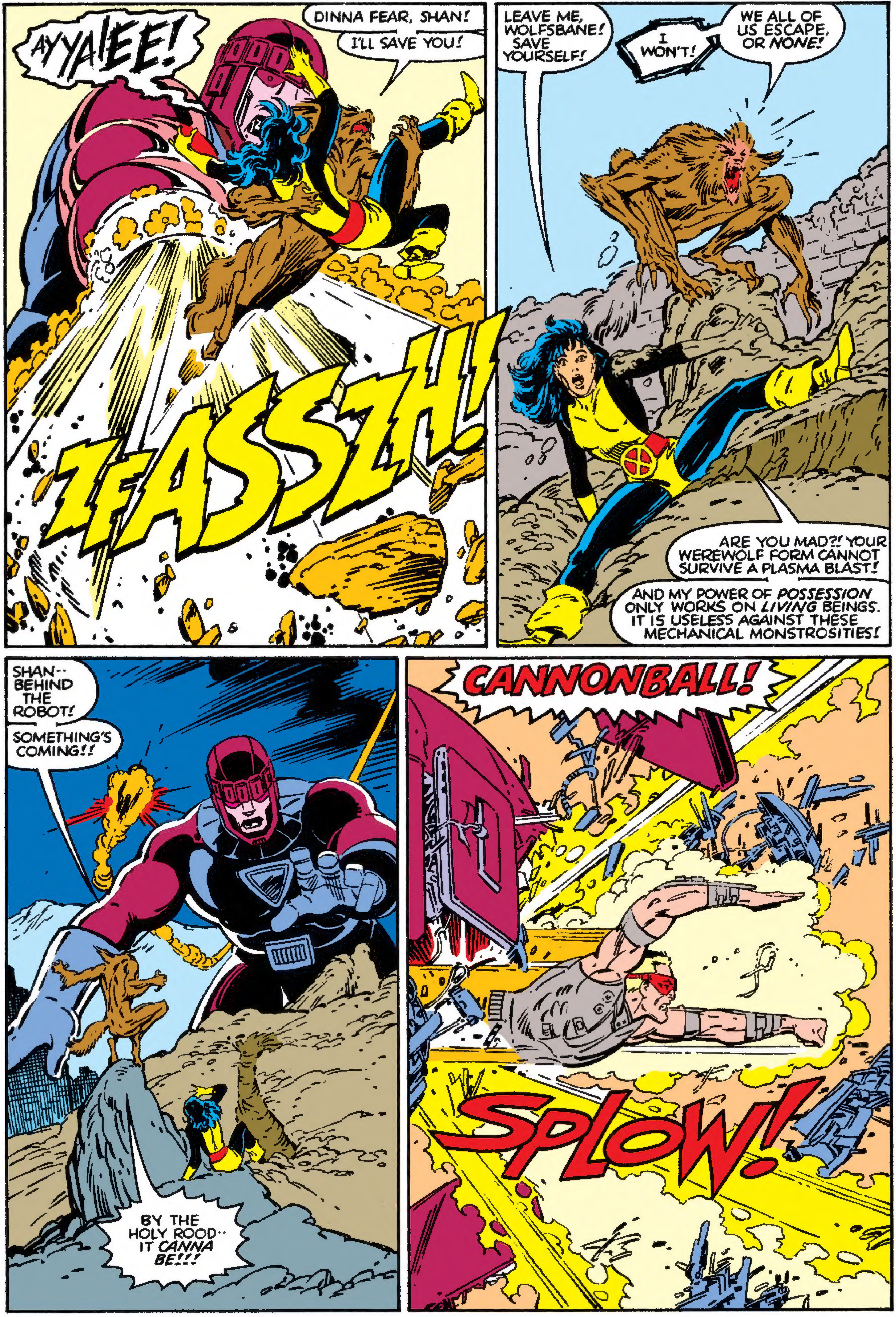
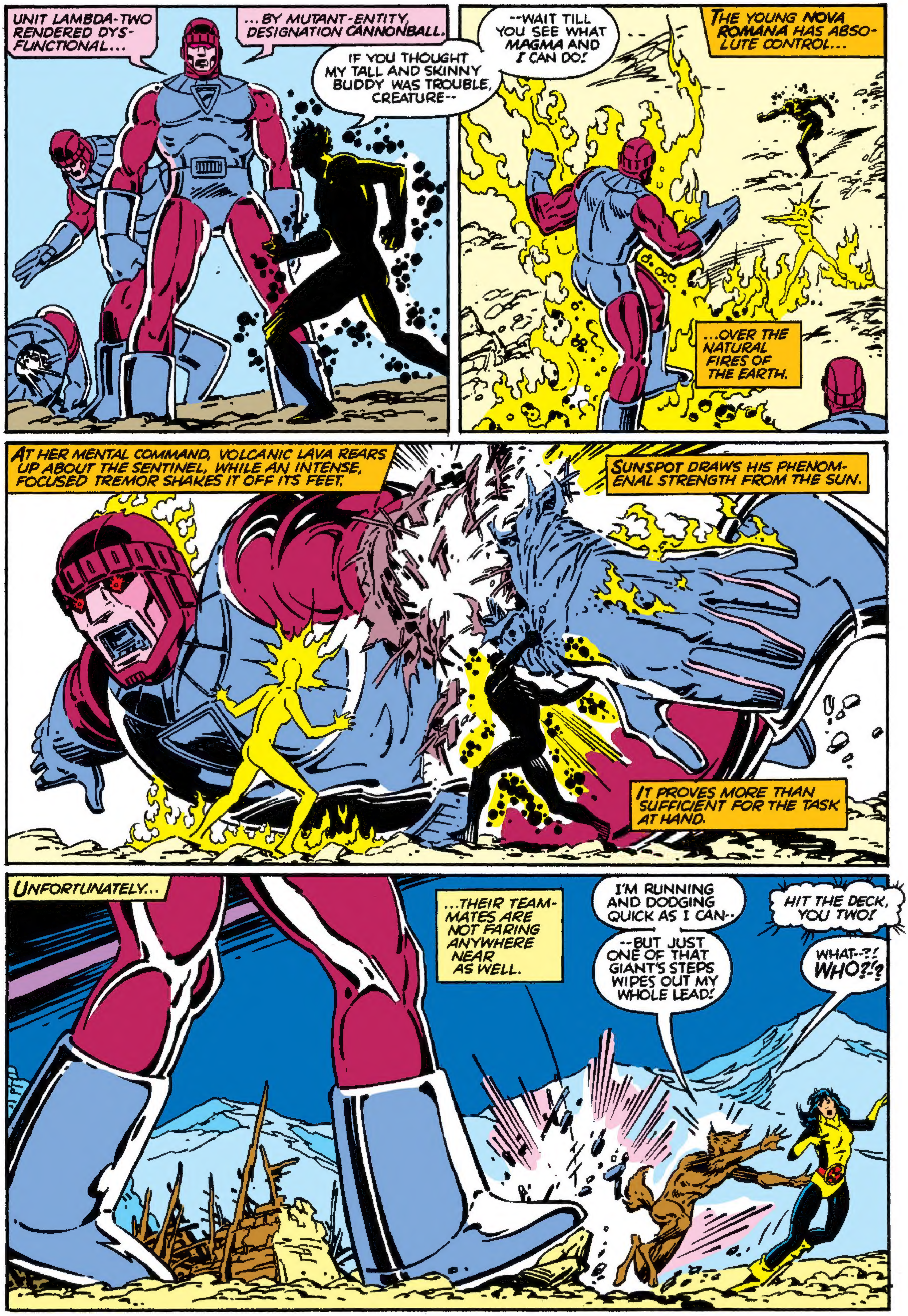
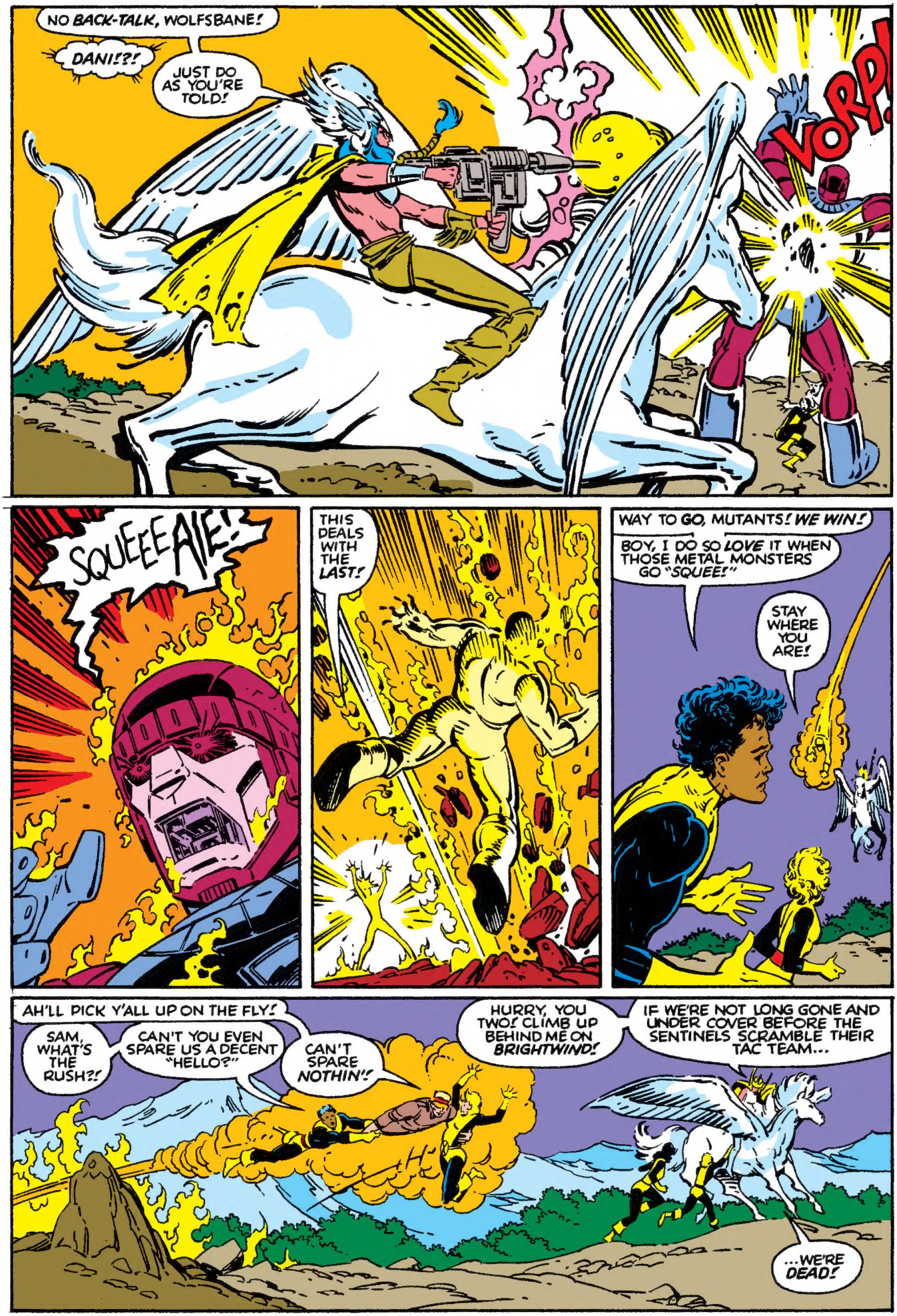
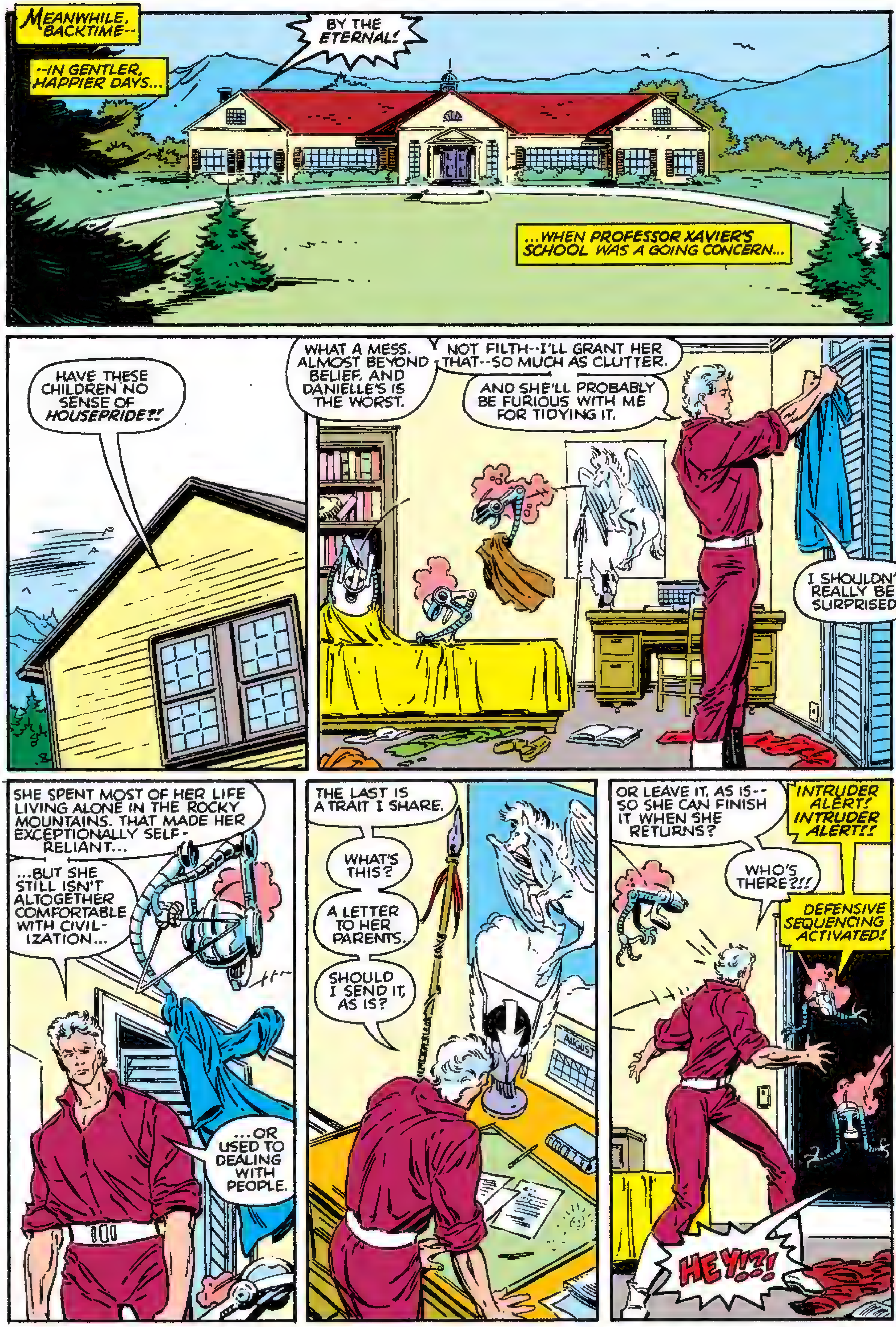

MES BRAVES--
--WE ARE HOME!
CONTACT ESTABLISHED.
LOCATION, WITHIN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.
SCORCHED EARTH AND DESOLATION--WORSE EVEN THAN VIETNAM.
Oh, SHAN--WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!!
INTRUDERS IDENTIFIED AS SUPERHUMAN ENHANCED POWER BEINGS.
COLLOQUIAL REFERENT, MUTANTS.
WHATEVER IT WAS, RAHNE, HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO. THESE RUINS ARE OLD.
"TERMINATED," ROBERTO--THAT MEANS SLAIN.
GE
THOSE FACES--THEY'RE ALL ADULTS. AND SOME OF THEM ARE US!
SPECIFIC IDENTIFAX: KARMA...
...WOLFSBANE...
...SUNSPOT...
...MAGMA--
--GROUP AFFILIATION, XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
DESIGNATION, CONDEMNED FELONS. STATUS, FUGITIVES. RESOLUTION, IMMEDIATE EXECUTION.

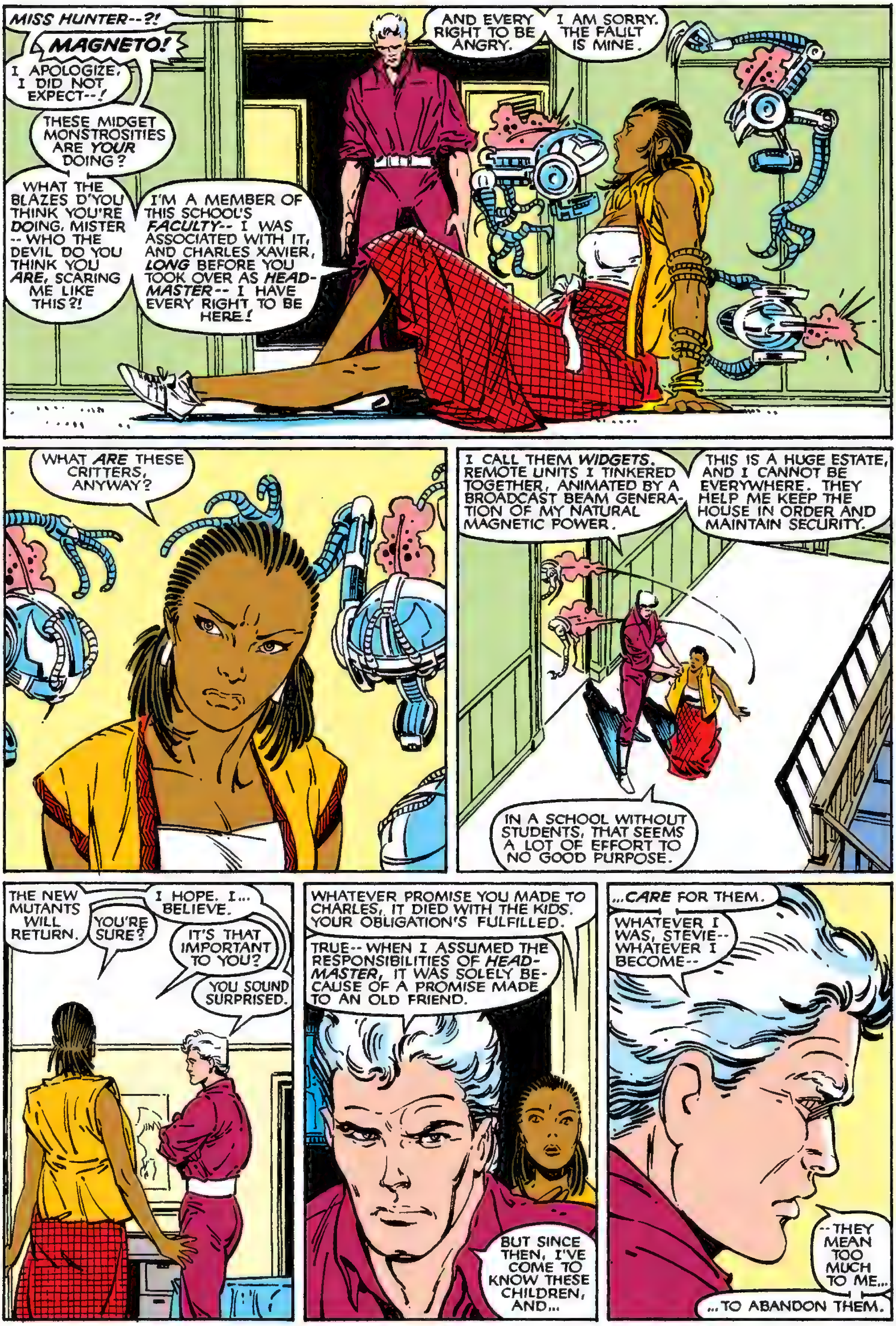

ANOMALY! CENTRAL RECORDS LISTS ALL FOUR SUBJECTS AS SUCCESSFULLY TERMINATED.
EVIDENT ERROR IN MASTER FILE. SUBJECTS EXIST. THEREFORE, TERMINATION WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.
ALL UNITS-- PATROL FORCE LAMBDA-- FULL PRIMARY PROGRAMMING.
BY HECATE-- WHAT ARE *THEY?!*
SENTINELS!
GIANT MUTANT-HUNTING *ROBOTS*, THE SOULLESS, GODLESS *SPALEEN!*
FROM THE WAY THEY'RE TALKING--
--THEY MEAN TO *KILL US!*
EVERYONE-- *SCATTER!*

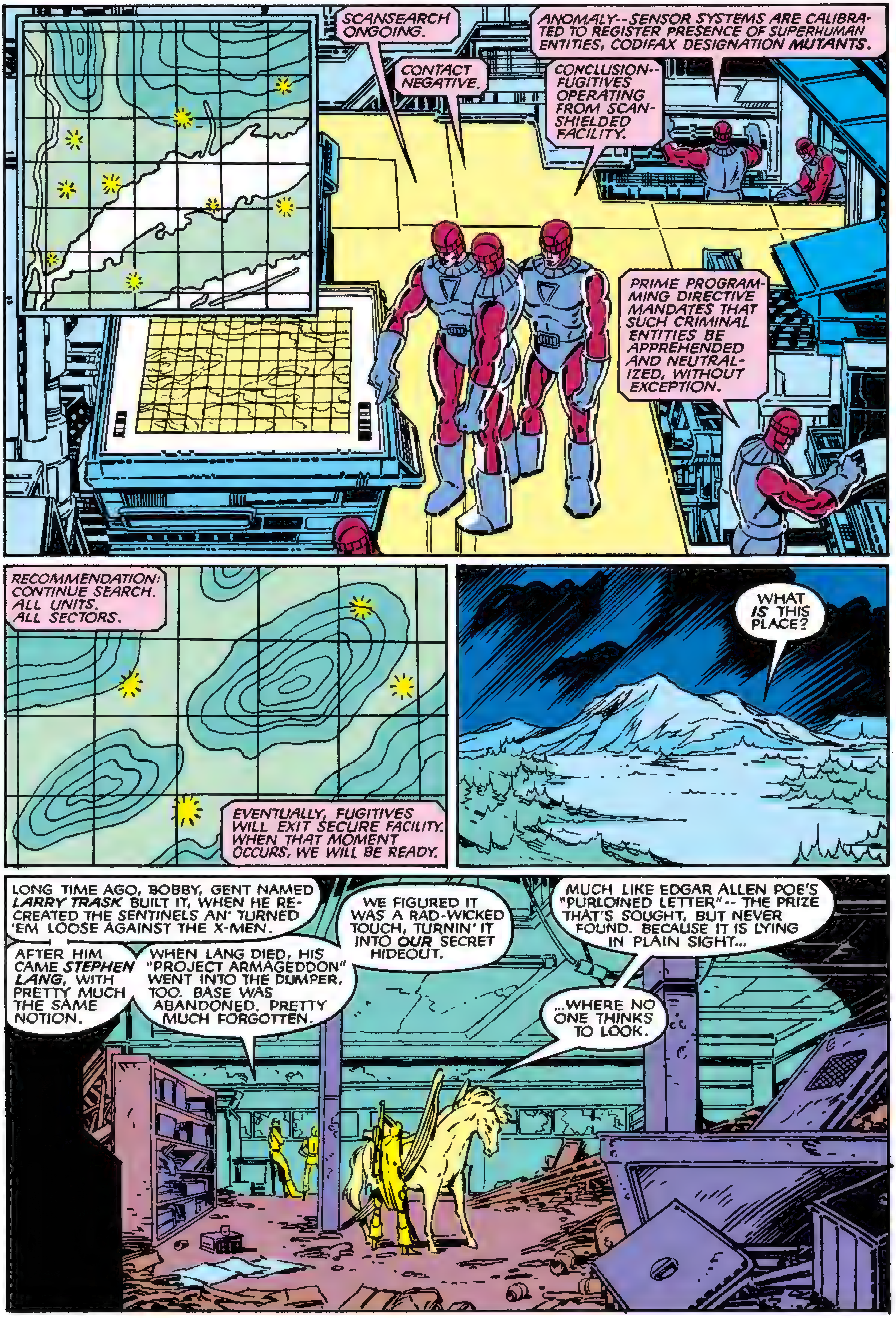

AYYAIEE!
DINNA FEAR, SHAN! I'LL SAVE YOU!
ZFASSZH!
LEAVE ME, WOLFSBANE! SAVE YOURSELF!
I WON'T!
WE ALL OF US ESCAPE, OR *NONE!*
ARE YOU MAD?! YOUR WEREWOLF FORM CANNOT SURVIVE A PLASMA BLAST!
AND MY POWER OF *POSSESSION* ONLY WORKS ON *LIVING* BEINGS. IT IS USELESS AGAINST THESE MECHANICAL MONSTROSITIES!
SHAN-- BEHIND THE ROBOT!
SOMETHING'S COMING!!
BY THE HOLY ROOD-- IT *CANNA BE!!!*
CANNONBALL!
SPLOW!

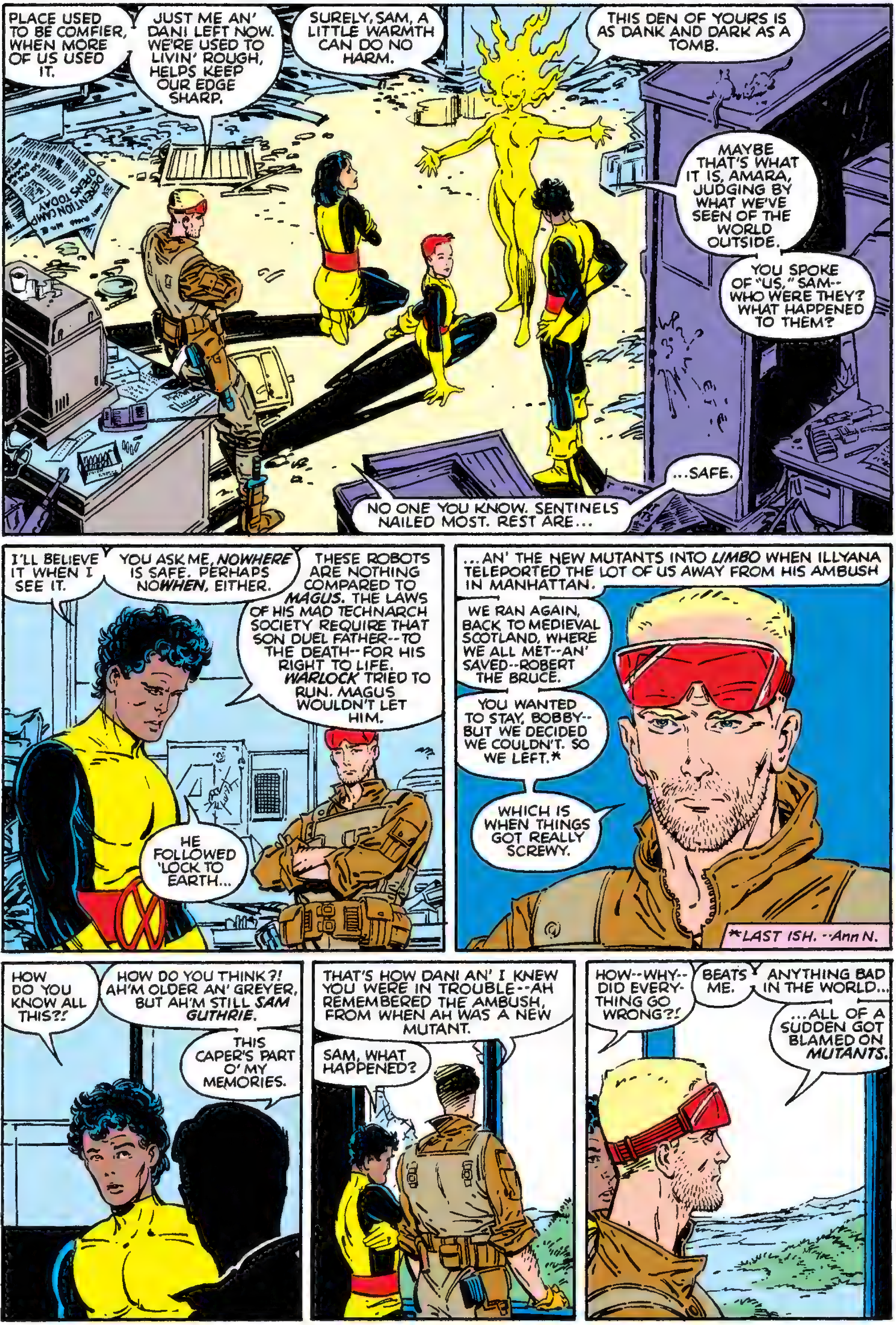

UNIT LAMBDA-TWO RENDERED DYS-FUNCTIONAL...
...BY MUTANT-ENTITY, DESIGNATION CANNONBALL.
IF YOU THOUGHT MY TALL AND SKINNY BUDDY WAS TROUBLE, CREATURE--
--WAIT TILL YOU SEE WHAT MAGMA AND I CAN DO!
THE YOUNG NOVA ROMANA HAS ABSOLUTE CONTROL...
...OVER THE NATURAL FIRES OF THE EARTH.
AT HER MENTAL COMMAND, VOLCANIC LAVA REARS UP ABOUT THE SENTINEL, WHILE AN INTENSE, FOCUSED TREMOR SHAKES IT OFF ITS FEET.
SUNSPOT DRAWS HIS PHENOMENAL STRENGTH FROM THE SUN.
IT PROVES MORE THAN SUFFICIENT FOR THE TASK AT HAND.
UNFORTUNATELY...
...THEIR TEAMMATES ARE NOT FARING ANYWHERE NEAR AS WELL.
I'M RUNNING AND DODGING QUICK AS I CAN--
--BUT JUST ONE OF THAT GIANT'S STEPS WIPES OUT MY WHOLE LEAD!
HIT THE DECK, YOU TWO!
WHAT--?! WHO?!?

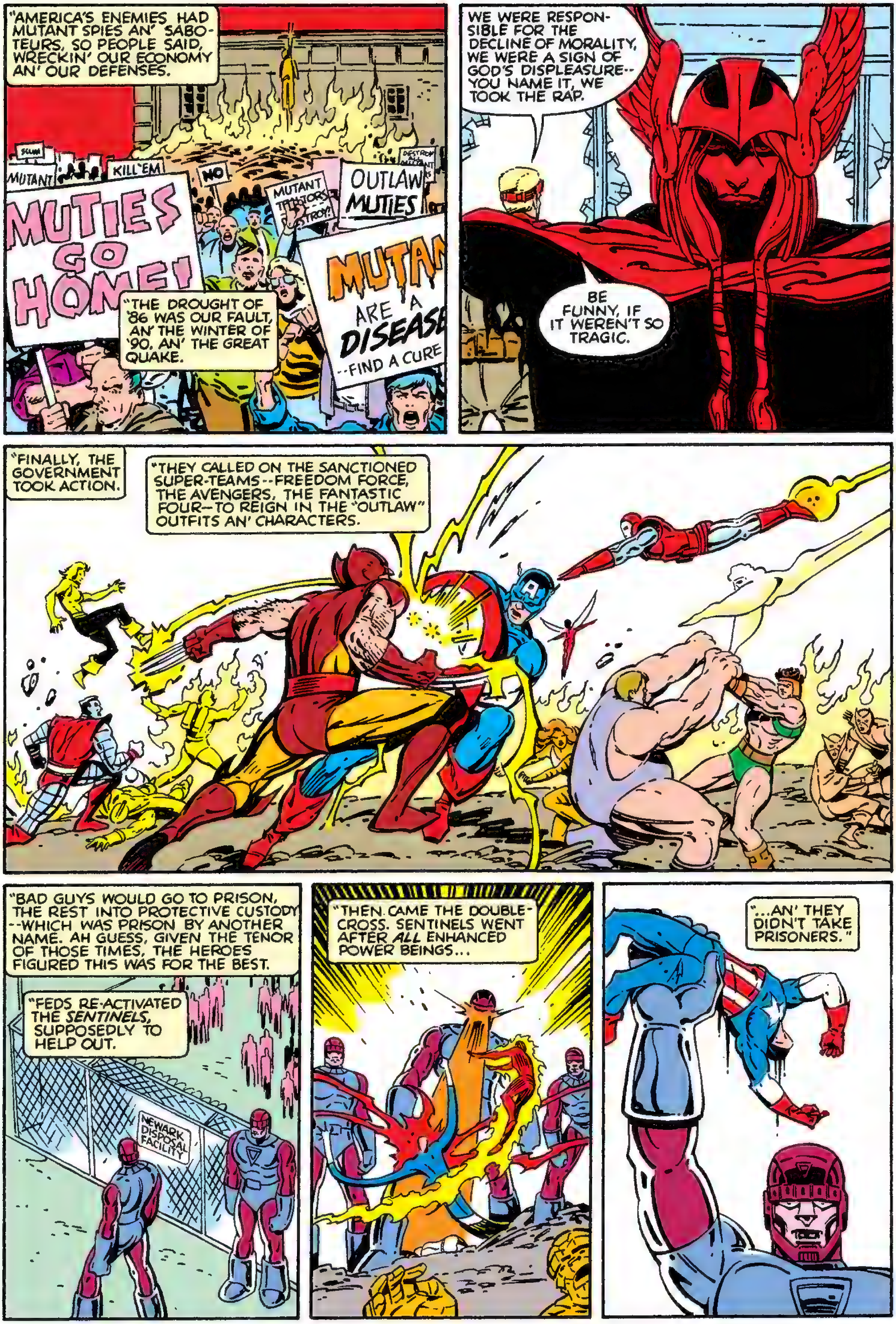

NO BACK-TALK, WOLFSBANE!
DANI!?!
JUST DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!
VORP!
SQUEEEAIE!
THIS DEALS WITH THE LAST!
WAY TO GO, MUTANTS! WE WIN!
BOY, I DO SO LOVE IT WHEN THOSE METAL MONSTERS GO "SQUEE!"
STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
AH'LL PICK Y'ALL UP ON THE FLY!
SAM, WHAT'S THE RUSH?!
CAN'T YOU EVEN SPARE US A DECENT "HELLO?"
CAN'T SPARE NOTHIN'!
HURRY, YOU TWO! CLIMB UP BEHIND ME ON BRIGHTWIND!
IF WE'RE NOT LONG GONE AND UNDER COVER BEFORE THE SENTINELS SCRAMBLE THEIR TAC TEAM...
...WE'RE DEAD!

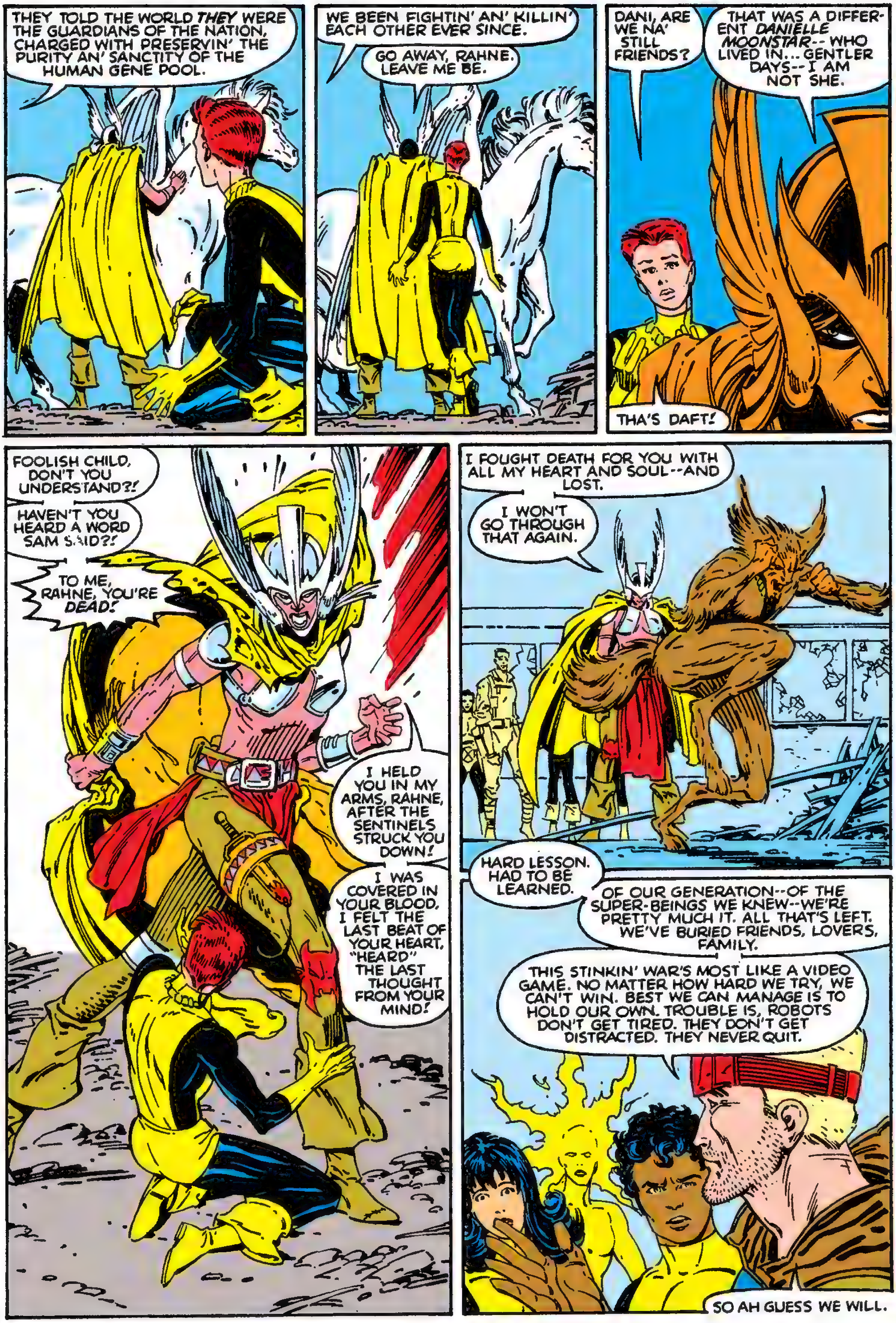

MEANWHILE, BACKTIME--
--IN GENTLER, HAPPIER DAYS...
BY THE ETERNAL!
...WHEN PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL WAS A GOING CONCERN...
HAVE THESE CHILDREN NO SENSE OF HOUSEPRIDE?!
WHAT A MESS. ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF. AND DANIELLE'S IS THE WORST.
NOT FILTH--I'LL GRANT HER THAT--SO MUCH AS CLUTTER.
AND SHE'LL PROBABLY BE FURIOUS WITH ME FOR TIDYING IT.
I SHOULDN'T REALLY BE SURPRISED.
SHE SPENT MOST OF HER LIFE LIVING ALONE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. THAT MADE HER EXCEPTIONALLY SELF-RELIANT...
...BUT SHE STILL ISN'T ALTOGETHER COMFORTABLE WITH CIVILIZATION...
...OR USED TO DEALING WITH PEOPLE.
THE LAST IS A TRAIT I SHARE.
WHAT'S THIS?
A LETTER TO HER PARENTS.
SHOULD I SEND IT, AS IS?
AUGUST
OR LEAVE IT, AS IS--SO SHE CAN FINISH IT WHEN SHE RETURNS?
INTRUDER ALERT! INTRUDER ALERT!!
WHO'S THERE?!!
DEFENSIVE SEQUENCING ACTIVATED!
HEY!?!

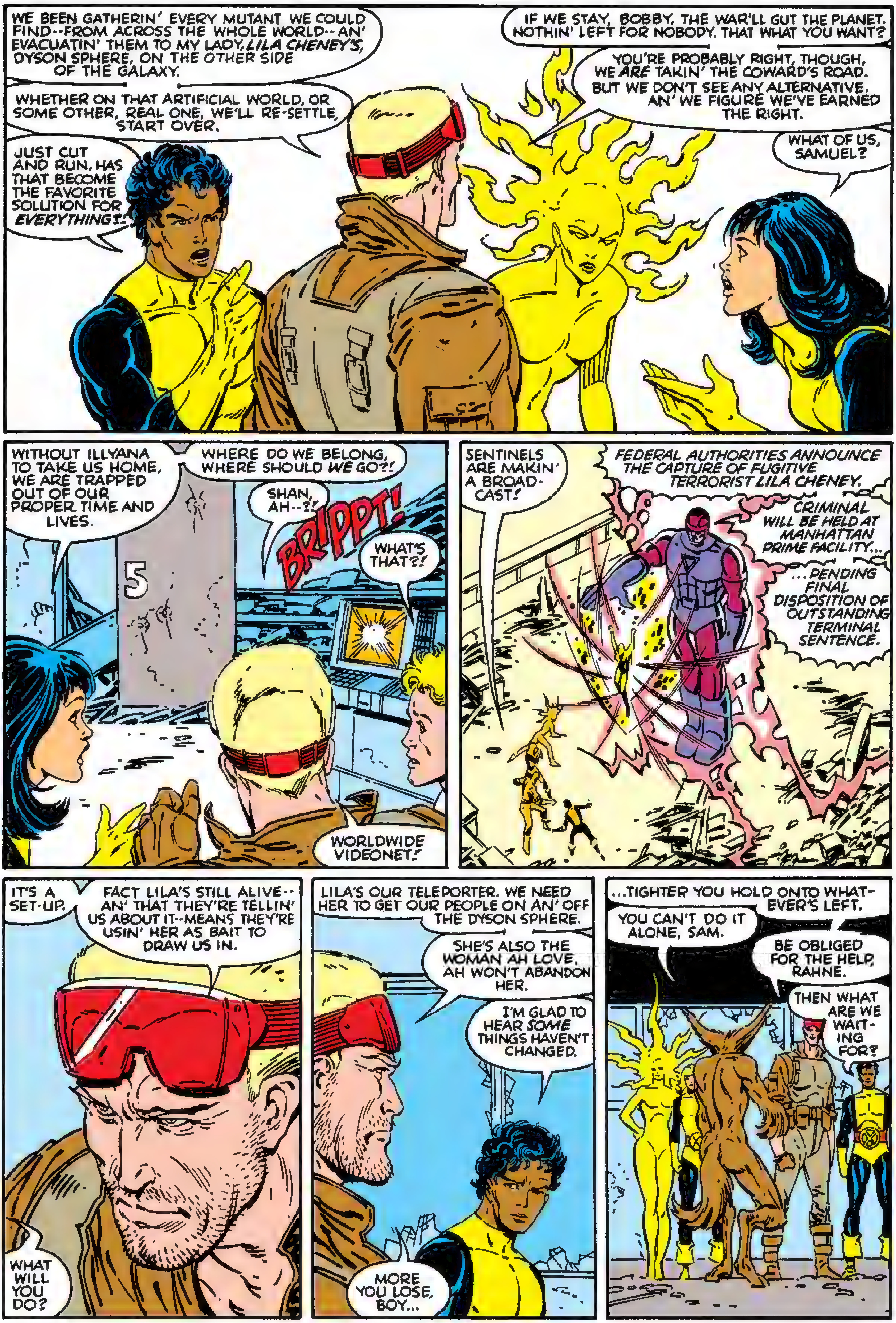

MISS HUNTER--?!
MAGNETO!
I APOLOGIZE. I DID NOT EXPECT--!
THESE MIDGET MONSTROSITIES ARE *YOUR* DOING?
WHAT THE BLAZES D'YOU THINK YOU'RE *DOING*, MISTER -- WHO THE DEVIL DO YOU THINK YOU *ARE*, SCARING ME LIKE THIS?!
I'M A MEMBER OF THIS SCHOOL'S *FACULTY*-- I WAS ASSOCIATED WITH IT, AND CHARLES XAVIER, *LONG* BEFORE YOU TOOK OVER AS *HEADMASTER*-- I HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE HERE!
AND EVERY RIGHT TO BE ANGRY.
I AM SORRY. THE FAULT IS MINE.
WHAT *ARE* THESE CRITTERS, ANYWAY?
I CALL THEM *WIDGETS*. REMOTE UNITS I TINKERED TOGETHER, ANIMATED BY A BROADCAST BEAM GENERATION OF MY NATURAL MAGNETIC POWER.
THIS IS A HUGE ESTATE, AND I CANNOT BE EVERYWHERE. THEY HELP ME KEEP THE HOUSE IN ORDER AND MAINTAIN SECURITY.
IN A SCHOOL WITHOUT STUDENTS, THAT SEEMS A LOT OF EFFORT TO NO GOOD PURPOSE.
THE NEW MUTANTS WILL RETURN.
YOU'RE SURE?
I HOPE. I... BELIEVE.
IT'S THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?
YOU SOUND SURPRISED.
WHATEVER PROMISE YOU MADE TO CHARLES, IT DIED WITH THE KIDS. YOUR OBLIGATION'S FULFILLED.
TRUE-- WHEN I ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF *HEADMASTER*, IT WAS SOLELY BECAUSE OF A PROMISE MADE TO AN OLD FRIEND.
BUT SINCE THEN, I'VE COME TO KNOW THESE CHILDREN, AND...
...*CARE* FOR THEM.
WHATEVER I WAS, STEVIE-- WHATEVER I BECOME--
--THEY MEAN TOO MUCH TO ME...
...TO ABANDON THEM.

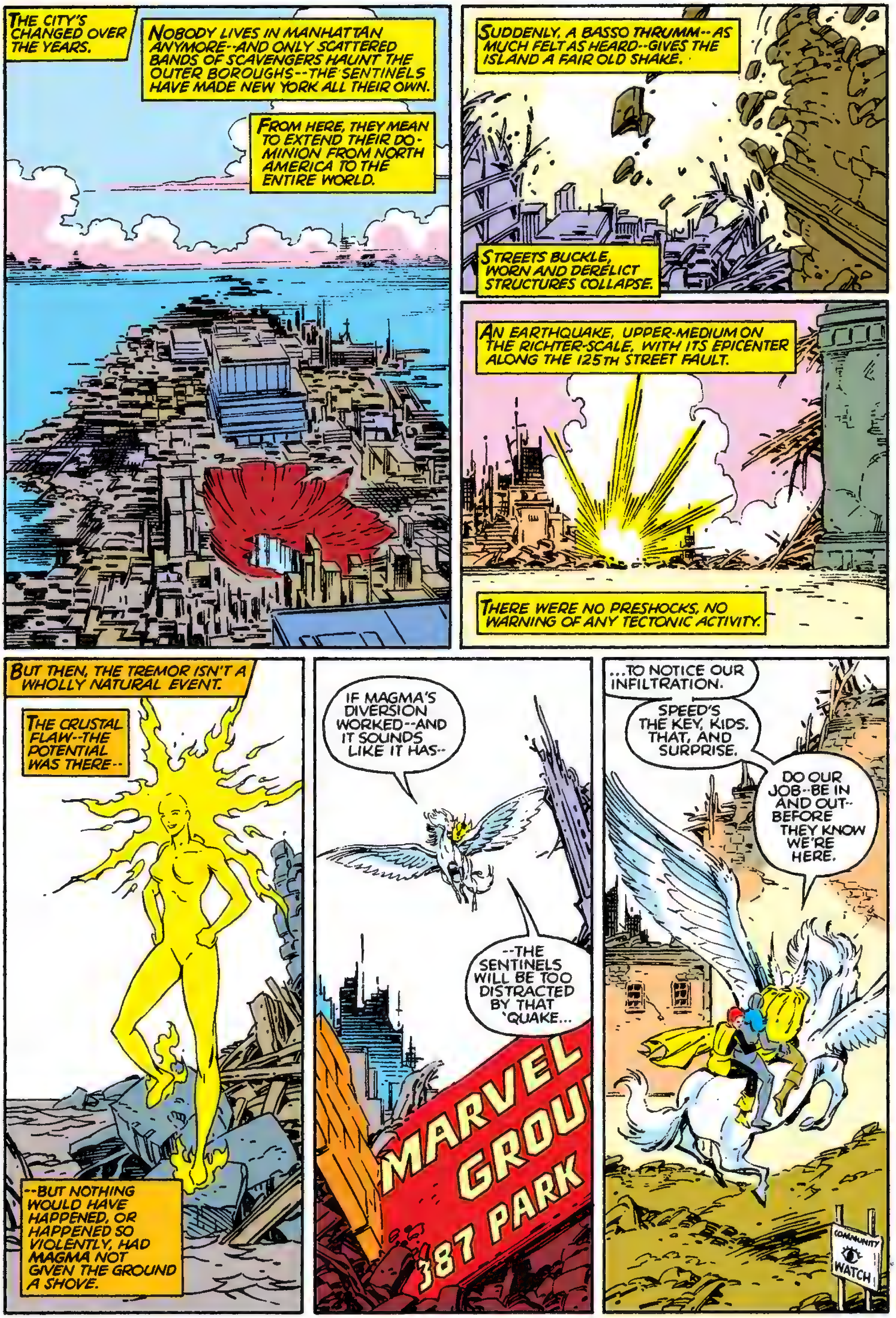

SCANSEARCH ONGOING.
CONTACT NEGATIVE.
ANOMALY--SENSOR SYSTEMS ARE CALIBRATED TO REGISTER PRESENCE OF SUPERHUMAN ENTITIES, CODIFAX DESIGNATION MUTANTS.
CONCLUSION--FUGITIVES OPERATING FROM SCAN-SHIELDED FACILITY.
PRIME PROGRAMMING DIRECTIVE MANDATES THAT SUCH CRIMINAL ENTITIES BE APPREHENDED AND NEUTRALIZED, WITHOUT EXCEPTION.
RECOMMENDATION: CONTINUE SEARCH. ALL UNITS. ALL SECTORS.
EVENTUALLY, FUGITIVES WILL EXIT SECURE FACILITY. WHEN THAT MOMENT OCCURS, WE WILL BE READY.
WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?
LONG TIME AGO, BOBBY, GENT NAMED *LARRY TRASK* BUILT IT, WHEN HE RECREATED THE *SENTINELS* AN' TURNED 'EM LOOSE AGAINST THE X-MEN.
AFTER HIM CAME *STEPHEN LANG*, WITH PRETTY MUCH THE SAME NOTION.
WHEN LANG DIED, HIS "PROJECT ARMAGEDDON" WENT INTO THE DUMPER, TOO. BASE WAS ABANDONED. PRETTY MUCH FORGOTTEN.
WE FIGURED IT WAS A RAD-WICKED TOUCH, TURNIN' IT INTO *OUR* SECRET HIDEOUT.
MUCH LIKE EDGAR ALLEN POE'S "PURLOINED LETTER"-- THE PRIZE THAT'S SOUGHT, BUT NEVER FOUND. BECAUSE IT IS LYING IN PLAIN SIGHT...
...WHERE NO ONE THINKS TO LOOK.

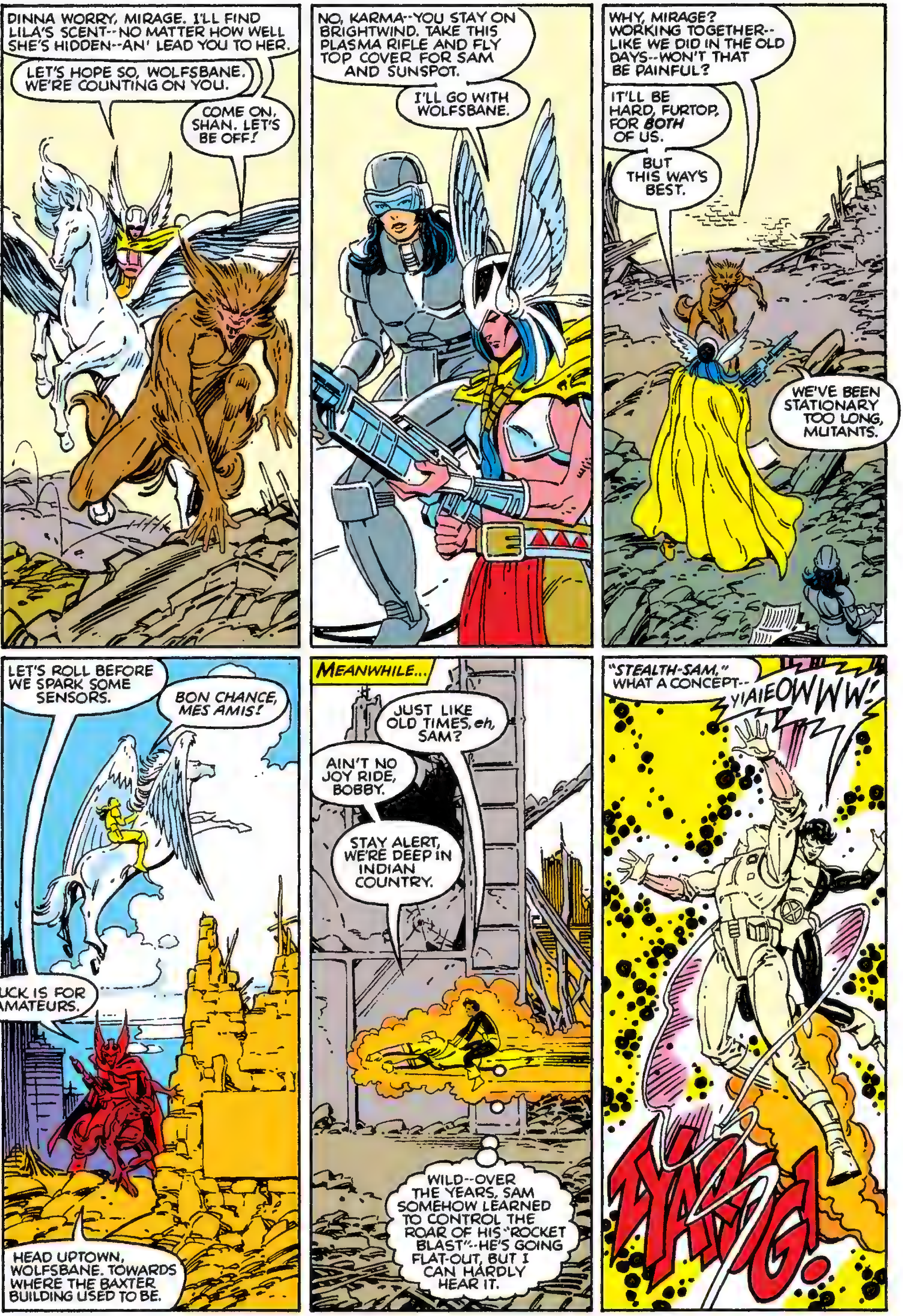

PLACE USED TO BE COMFIER, WHEN MORE OF US USED IT.
JUST ME AN' DANI LEFT NOW. WE'RE USED TO LIVIN' ROUGH, HELPS KEEP OUR EDGE SHARP.
SURELY, SAM, A LITTLE WARMTH CAN DO NO HARM.
THIS DEN OF YOURS IS AS DANK AND DARK AS A TOMB.
DETENTION CAMP OPENS TODAY
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT IT IS, AMARA, JUDGING BY WHAT WE'VE SEEN OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE.
YOU SPOKE OF "US," SAM-- WHO WERE THEY? WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
NO ONE YOU KNOW. SENTINELS NAILED MOST. REST ARE...
...SAFE.
I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.
YOU ASK ME, *NOWHERE* IS SAFE. PERHAPS NO*WHEN*, EITHER.
THESE ROBOTS ARE NOTHING COMPARED TO *MAGUS*. THE LAWS OF HIS MAD TECHNARCH SOCIETY REQUIRE THAT SON DUEL FATHER--TO THE DEATH--FOR HIS RIGHT TO LIFE. *WARLOCK* TRIED TO RUN. MAGUS WOULDN'T LET HIM.
HE FOLLOWED 'LOCK TO EARTH...
...AN' THE NEW MUTANTS INTO *LIMBO* WHEN ILLYANA TELEPORTED THE LOT OF US AWAY FROM HIS AMBUSH IN MANHATTAN.
WE RAN AGAIN, BACK TO MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND, WHERE WE ALL MET--AN' SAVED--ROBERT THE BRUCE.
YOU WANTED TO STAY, BOBBY--BUT WE DECIDED WE COULDN'T. SO WE LEFT.*
WHICH IS WHEN THINGS GOT REALLY SCREWY.
**LAST ISH. --Ann N.*
HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?!
HOW DO YOU THINK?! AH'M OLDER AN' GREYER, BUT AH'M STILL *SAM GUTHRIE*.
THIS CAPER'S PART O' MY MEMORIES.
THAT'S HOW DANI AN' I KNEW YOU WERE IN TROUBLE--AH REMEMBERED THE AMBUSH, FROM WHEN AH WAS A NEW MUTANT.
SAM, WHAT HAPPENED?
HOW--WHY--DID EVERYTHING GO WRONG?!
BEATS ME.
ANYTHING BAD IN THE WORLD...
...ALL OF A SUDDEN GOT BLAMED ON *MUTANTS*.

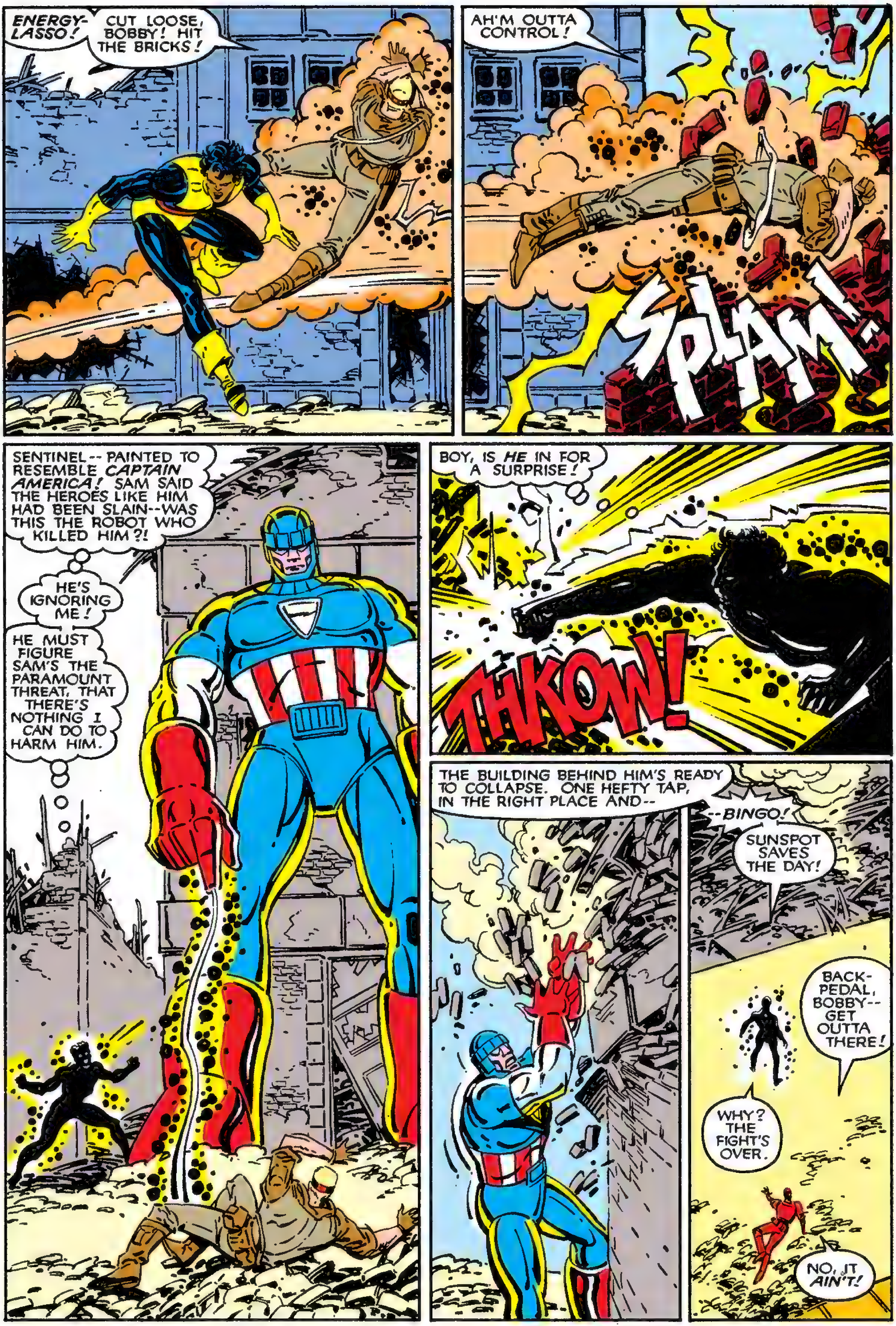

"AMERICA'S ENEMIES HAD MUTANT SPIES AN' SABOTEURS, SO PEOPLE SAID, WRECKIN' OUR ECONOMY AN' OUR DEFENSES.
SCUM
MUTANT
KILL 'EM
NO
MUTANT TRAITORS STROY!
DESTROY ALL MUTANTS
OUTLAW MUTIES
MUTIES GO HOME!
MUTAN ARE A DISEASE --FIND A CURE
"THE DROUGHT OF '86 WAS OUR FAULT, AN' THE WINTER OF '90, AN' THE GREAT QUAKE.
WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECLINE OF MORALITY, WE WERE A SIGN OF GOD'S DISPLEASURE-- YOU NAME IT, WE TOOK THE RAP.
BE FUNNY, IF IT WEREN'T SO TRAGIC.
"FINALLY, THE GOVERNMENT TOOK ACTION.
"THEY CALLED ON THE SANCTIONED SUPER-TEAMS--FREEDOM FORCE, THE AVENGERS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR--TO REIGN IN THE "OUTLAW" OUTFITS AN' CHARACTERS.
"BAD GUYS WOULD GO TO PRISON, THE REST INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY --WHICH WAS PRISON BY ANOTHER NAME. AH GUESS, GIVEN THE TENOR OF THOSE TIMES, THE HEROES FIGURED THIS WAS FOR THE BEST.
"FEDS RE-ACTIVATED THE *SENTINELS*, SUPPOSEDLY TO HELP OUT.
NEWARK DISPOSAL FACILITY
"THEN CAME THE DOUBLE-CROSS. SENTINELS WENT AFTER *ALL* ENHANCED POWER BEINGS...
"...AN' THEY DIDN'T TAKE PRISONERS."

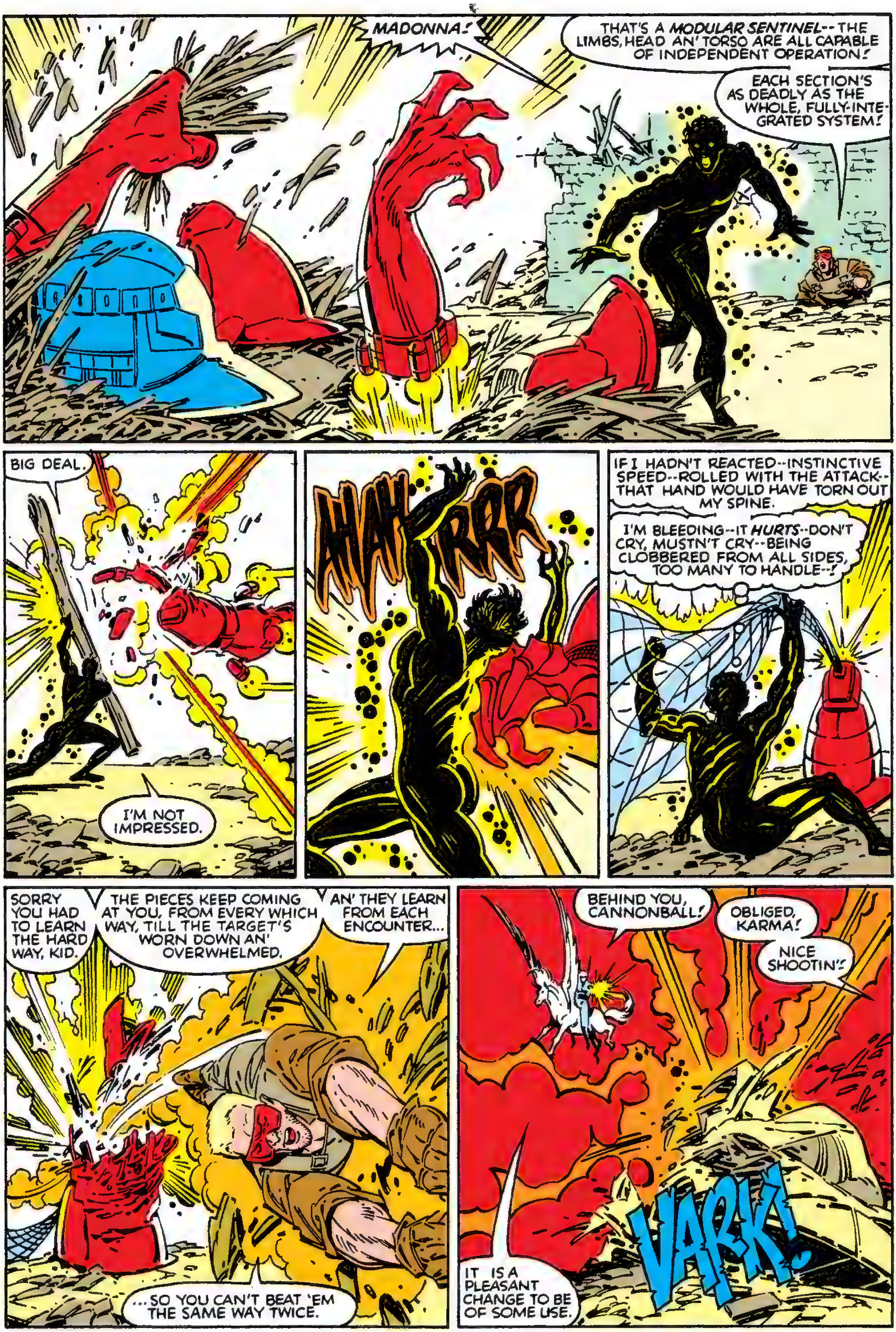

THEY TOLD THE WORLD *THEY* WERE THE GUARDIANS OF THE NATION, CHARGED WITH PRESERVIN' THE PURITY AN' SANCTITY OF THE HUMAN GENE POOL.
WE BEEN FIGHTIN' AN' KILLIN' EACH OTHER EVER SINCE.
GO AWAY, RAHNE. LEAVE ME BE.
DANI, ARE WE NA' STILL FRIENDS?
THAT WAS A DIFFERENT *DANIELLE MOONSTAR*-- WHO LIVED IN... GENTLER DAYS-- I AM NOT SHE.
THA'S DAFT!
FOOLISH CHILD, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD A WORD SAM SAID?!
TO ME, RAHNE, YOU'RE *DEAD!*
I HELD YOU IN MY ARMS, RAHNE, AFTER THE SENTINELS STRUCK YOU DOWN!
I WAS COVERED IN YOUR BLOOD, I FELT THE LAST BEAT OF YOUR HEART, "HEARD" THE LAST THOUGHT FROM YOUR MIND!
I FOUGHT DEATH FOR YOU WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL--AND LOST.
I WON'T GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN.
HARD LESSON. HAD TO BE LEARNED.
OF OUR GENERATION--OF THE SUPER-BEINGS WE KNEW--WE'RE PRETTY MUCH IT. ALL THAT'S LEFT. WE'VE BURIED FRIENDS, LOVERS, FAMILY.
THIS STINKIN' WAR'S MOST LIKE A VIDEO GAME. NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY, WE CAN'T WIN. BEST WE CAN MANAGE IS TO HOLD OUR OWN. TROUBLE IS, ROBOTS DON'T GET TIRED. THEY DON'T GET DISTRACTED. THEY NEVER QUIT.
SO AH GUESS WE WILL.

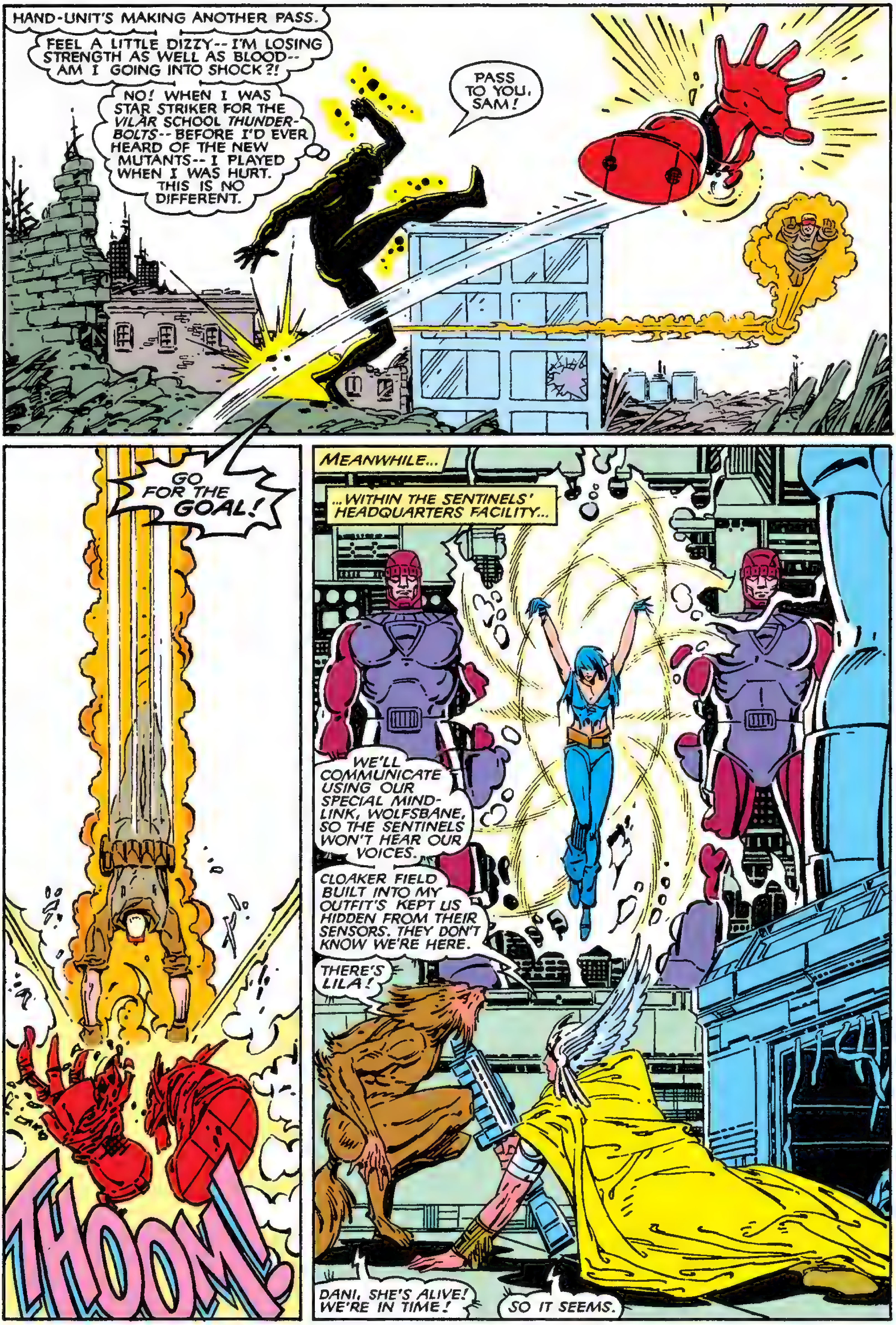

WE BEEN GATHERIN' EVERY MUTANT WE COULD FIND--FROM ACROSS THE WHOLE WORLD--AN' EVACUATIN' THEM TO MY LADY, *LILA CHENEY'S*, DYSON SPHERE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GALAXY.
WHETHER ON THAT ARTIFICIAL WORLD, OR SOME OTHER, REAL ONE, WE'LL RE-SETTLE, START OVER.
JUST CUT AND RUN, HAS THAT BECOME THE FAVORITE SOLUTION FOR *EVERYTHING*?!
IF WE STAY, BOBBY, THE WAR'LL GUT THE PLANET. NOTHIN' LEFT FOR NOBODY. THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT, THOUGH, WE *ARE* TAKIN' THE COWARD'S ROAD. BUT WE DON'T SEE ANY ALTERNATIVE. AN' WE FIGURE WE'VE EARNED THE RIGHT.
WHAT OF US, SAMUEL?
WITHOUT ILLYANA TO TAKE US HOME, WE ARE TRAPPED OUT OF OUR PROPER TIME AND LIVES.
WHERE DO WE BELONG, WHERE SHOULD *WE* GO?!
SHAN, AH--?!
BRIPPT!
WHAT'S THAT?!
5
WORLDWIDE VIDEONET!
SENTINELS ARE MAKIN' A BROADCAST!
FEDERAL AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCE THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE TERRORIST LILA CHENEY.
CRIMINAL WILL BE HELD AT MANHATTAN PRIME FACILITY...
...PENDING FINAL DISPOSITION OF OUTSTANDING TERMINAL SENTENCE.
IT'S A SET-UP.
FACT LILA'S STILL ALIVE--AN' THAT THEY'RE TELLIN' US ABOUT IT--MEANS THEY'RE USIN' HER AS BAIT TO DRAW US IN.
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
LILA'S OUR TELEPORTER. WE NEED HER TO GET OUR PEOPLE ON AN' OFF THE DYSON SPHERE.
SHE'S ALSO THE WOMAN AH LOVE. AH WON'T ABANDON HER.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR *SOME* THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED.
MORE YOU LOSE, BOY...
...TIGHTER YOU HOLD ONTO WHAT-EVER'S LEFT.
YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE, SAM.
BE OBLIGED FOR THE HELP, RAHNE.
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAIT-ING FOR?

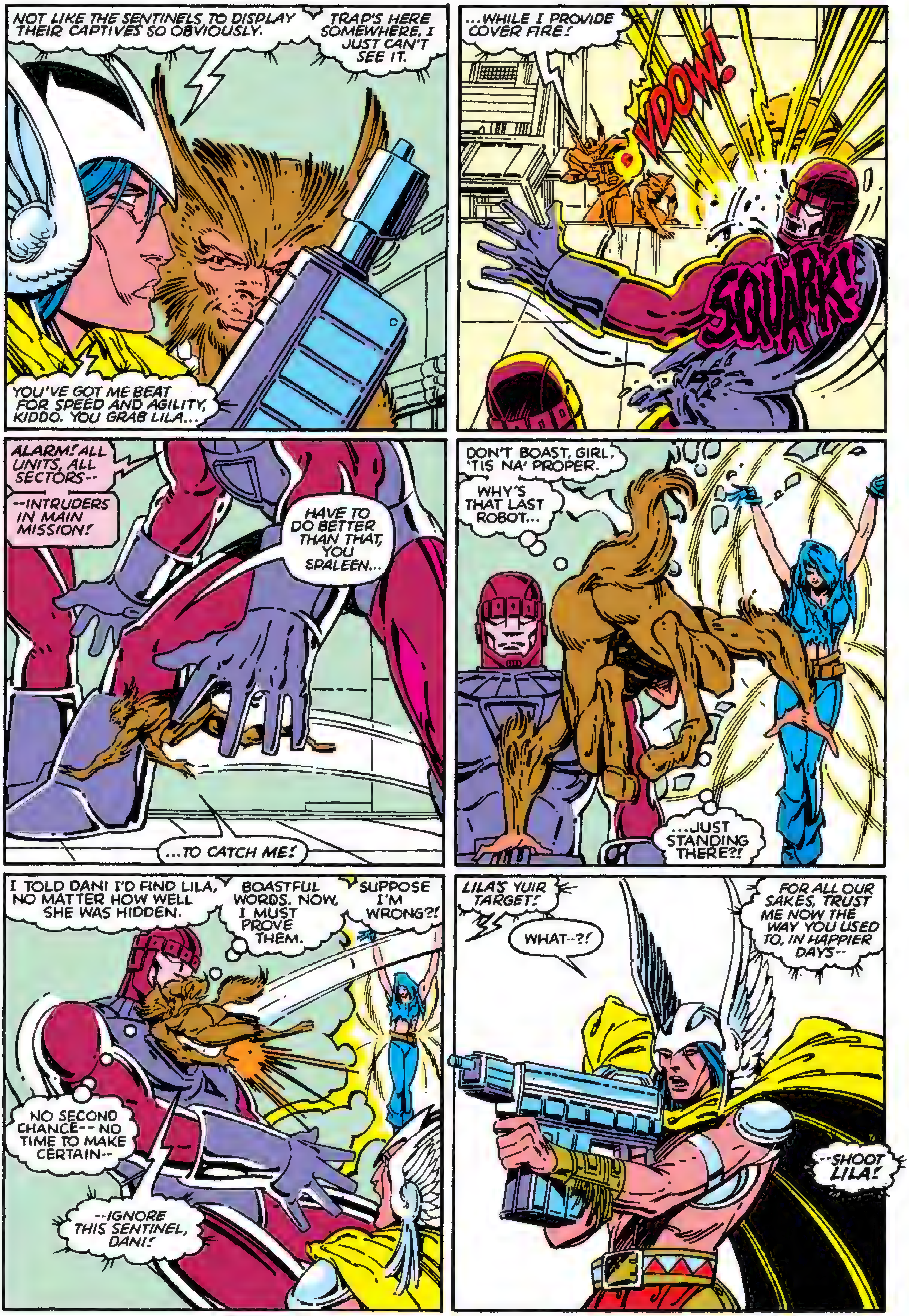

THE CITY'S CHANGED OVER THE YEARS.
NOBODY LIVES IN MANHATTAN ANYMORE--AND ONLY SCATTERED BANDS OF SCAVENGERS HAUNT THE OUTER BOROUGHS--THE SENTINELS HAVE MADE NEW YORK ALL THEIR OWN.
FROM HERE, THEY MEAN TO EXTEND THEIR DOMINION FROM NORTH AMERICA TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.
SUDDENLY, A BASSO THRUMM--AS MUCH FELT AS HEARD--GIVES THE ISLAND A FAIR OLD SHAKE.
STREETS BUCKLE, WORN AND DERELICT STRUCTURES COLLAPSE.
AN EARTHQUAKE, UPPER-MEDIUM ON THE RICHTER-SCALE, WITH ITS EPICENTER ALONG THE 125TH STREET FAULT.
THERE WERE NO PRESHOCKS, NO WARNING OF ANY TECTONIC ACTIVITY.
BUT THEN, THE TREMOR ISN'T A WHOLLY NATURAL EVENT.
THE CRUSTAL FLAW--THE POTENTIAL WAS THERE--
--BUT NOTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED, OR HAPPENED SO VIOLENTLY, HAD MAGMA NOT GIVEN THE GROUND A SHOVE.
IF MAGMA'S DIVERSION WORKED--AND IT SOUNDS LIKE IT HAS--
--THE SENTINELS WILL BE TOO DISTRACTED BY THAT 'QUAKE...
MARVEL GROU
387 PARK
...TO NOTICE OUR INFILTRATION.
SPEED'S THE KEY, KIDS. THAT, AND SURPRISE.
DO OUR JOB--BE IN AND OUT--BEFORE THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE.
COMMUNITY WATCH

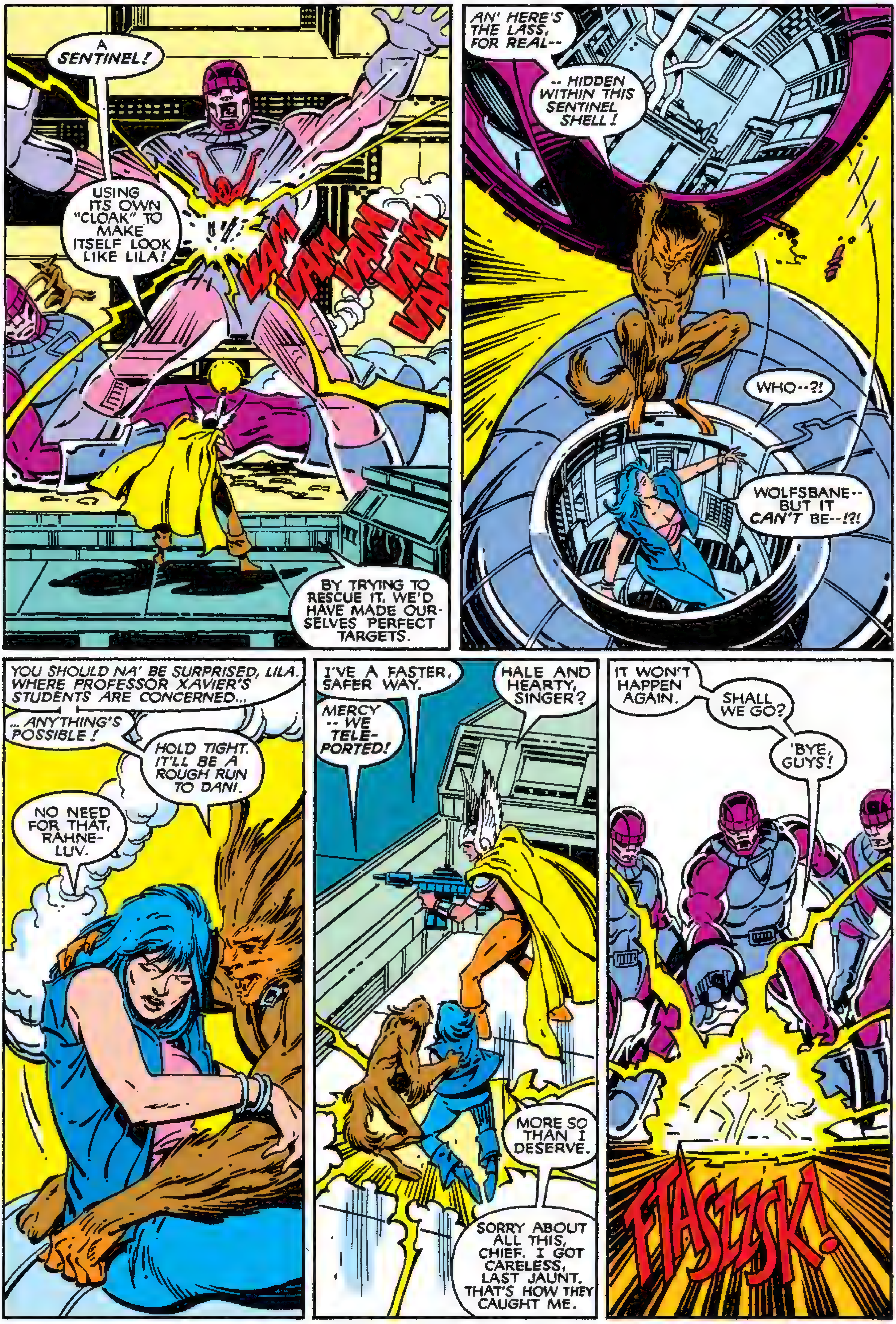

DINNA WORRY, MIRAGE. I'LL FIND LILA'S SCENT--NO MATTER HOW WELL SHE'S HIDDEN--AN' LEAD YOU TO HER.
LET'S HOPE SO, WOLFSBANE. WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.
COME ON, SHAN. LET'S BE OFF!
NO, KARMA--YOU STAY ON BRIGHTWIND. TAKE THIS PLASMA RIFLE AND FLY TOP COVER FOR SAM AND SUNSPOT.
I'LL GO WITH WOLFSBANE.
WHY, MIRAGE? WORKING TOGETHER--LIKE WE DID IN THE OLD DAYS--WON'T THAT BE PAINFUL?
IT'LL BE HARD, FURTOP, FOR *BOTH* OF US.
BUT THIS WAY'S BEST.
WE'VE BEEN STATIONARY TOO LONG, MUTANTS.
LET'S ROLL BEFORE WE SPARK SOME SENSORS.
BON CHANCE, MES AMIS!
LUCK IS FOR AMATEURS.
HEAD UPTOWN, WOLFSBANE. TOWARDS WHERE THE BAXTER BUILDING USED TO BE.
MEANWHILE...
JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, *eh,* SAM?
AIN'T NO JOY RIDE, BOBBY.
STAY ALERT. WE'RE DEEP IN INDIAN COUNTRY.
WILD--OVER THE YEARS, SAM SOMEHOW LEARNED TO CONTROL THE ROAR OF HIS "ROCKET BLAST"--HE'S GOING FLAT-OUT, BUT I CAN HARDLY HEAR IT.
"STEALTH-SAM," WHAT A CONCEPT--
YIAIEOWWW!
ZZAKKG!

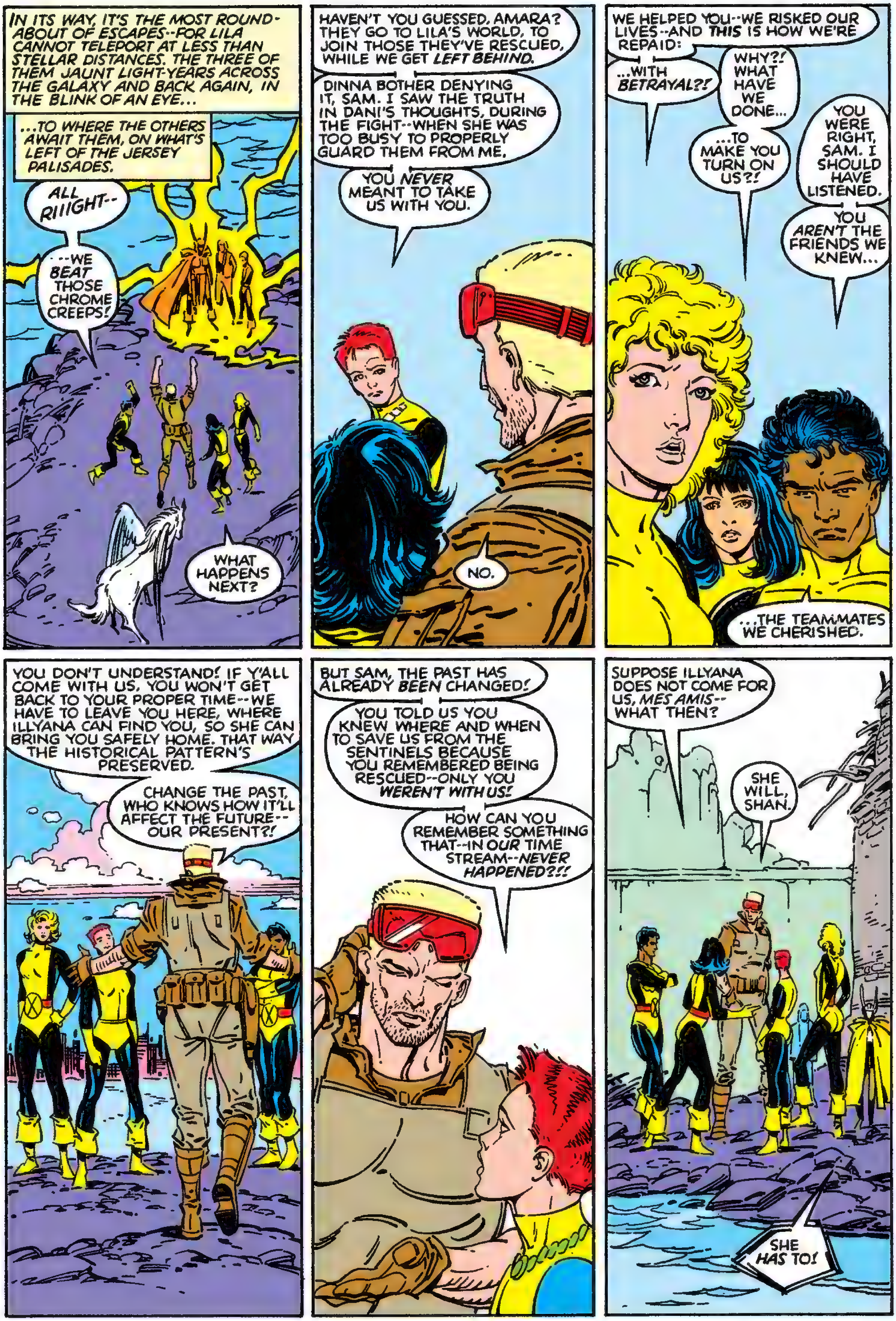

ENERGY-LASSO!
CUT LOOSE, BOBBY! HIT THE BRICKS!
AH'M OUTTA CONTROL!
SPLAM!
SENTINEL -- PAINTED TO RESEMBLE CAPTAIN AMERICA! SAM SAID THE HEROES LIKE HIM HAD BEEN SLAIN--WAS THIS THE ROBOT WHO KILLED HIM?!
HE'S IGNORING ME!
HE MUST FIGURE SAM'S THE PARAMOUNT THREAT, THAT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO HARM HIM.
BOY, IS HE IN FOR A SURPRISE!
THKOW!
THE BUILDING BEHIND HIM'S READY TO COLLAPSE. ONE HEFTY TAP, IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND--
--BINGO!
SUNSPOT SAVES THE DAY!
BACK-PEDAL, BOBBY-- GET OUTTA THERE!
WHY? THE FIGHT'S OVER.
NO, IT AIN'T!

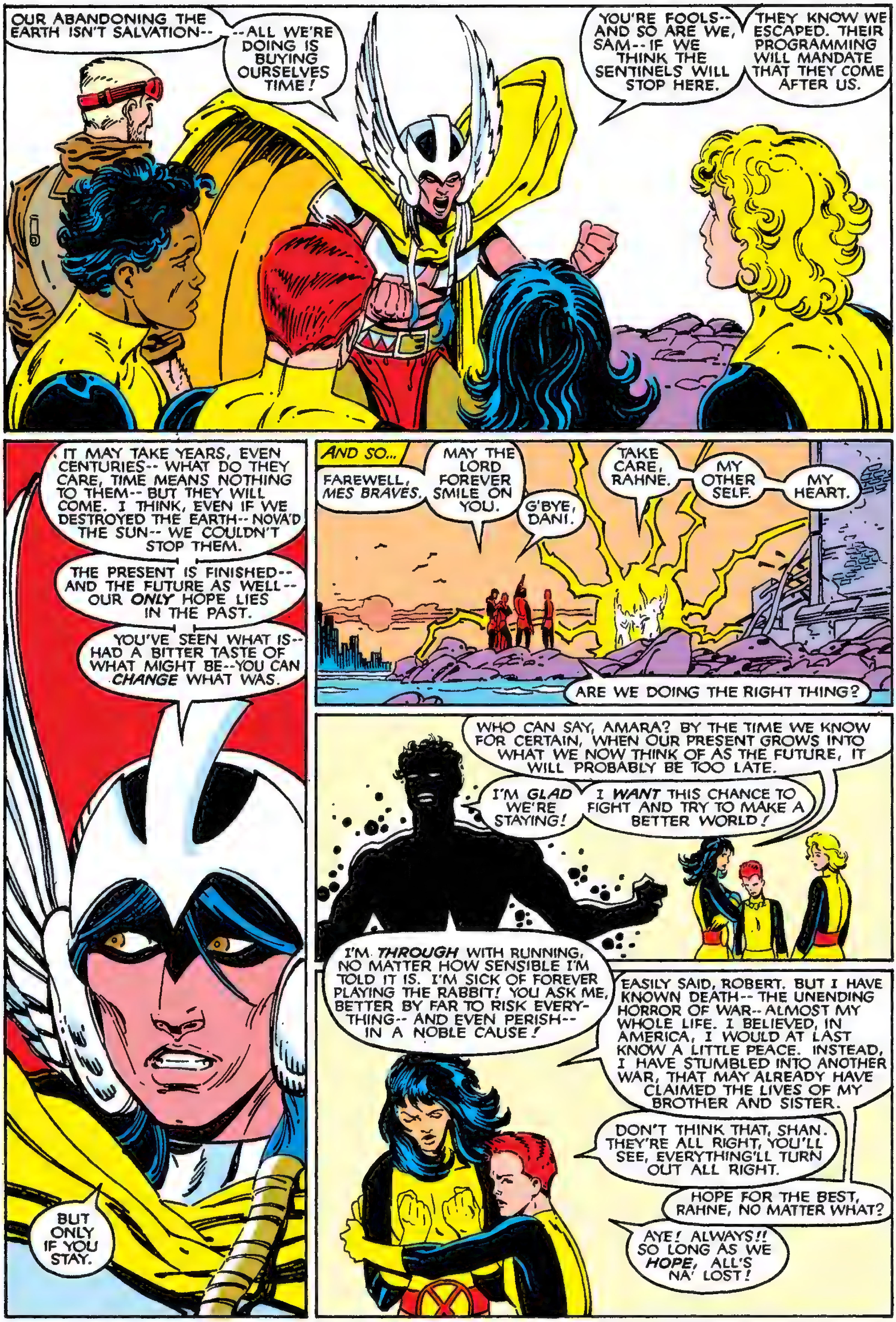

MADONNA!
THAT'S A *MODULAR SENTINEL*-- THE LIMBS, HEAD AN' TORSO ARE ALL CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT OPERATION!
EACH SECTION'S AS DEADLY AS THE WHOLE, FULLY-INTEGRATED SYSTEM!
BIG DEAL.
I'M NOT IMPRESSED.
AHAH RRR
IF I HADN'T REACTED--INSTINCTIVE SPEED--ROLLED WITH THE ATTACK--THAT HAND WOULD HAVE TORN OUT MY SPINE.
I'M BLEEDING--IT *HURTS*--DON'T CRY, MUSTN'T CRY--BEING CLOBBERED FROM ALL SIDES, TOO MANY TO HANDLE--!
SORRY YOU HAD TO LEARN THE HARD WAY, KID.
THE PIECES KEEP COMING AT YOU, FROM EVERY WHICH WAY, TILL THE TARGET'S WORN DOWN AN' OVERWHELMED.
AN' THEY LEARN FROM EACH ENCOUNTER...
...SO YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM THE SAME WAY TWICE.
BEHIND YOU, CANNONBALL!
OBLIGED, KARMA!
NICE SHOOTIN'!
VARK!
IT IS A PLEASANT CHANGE TO BE OF SOME USE.

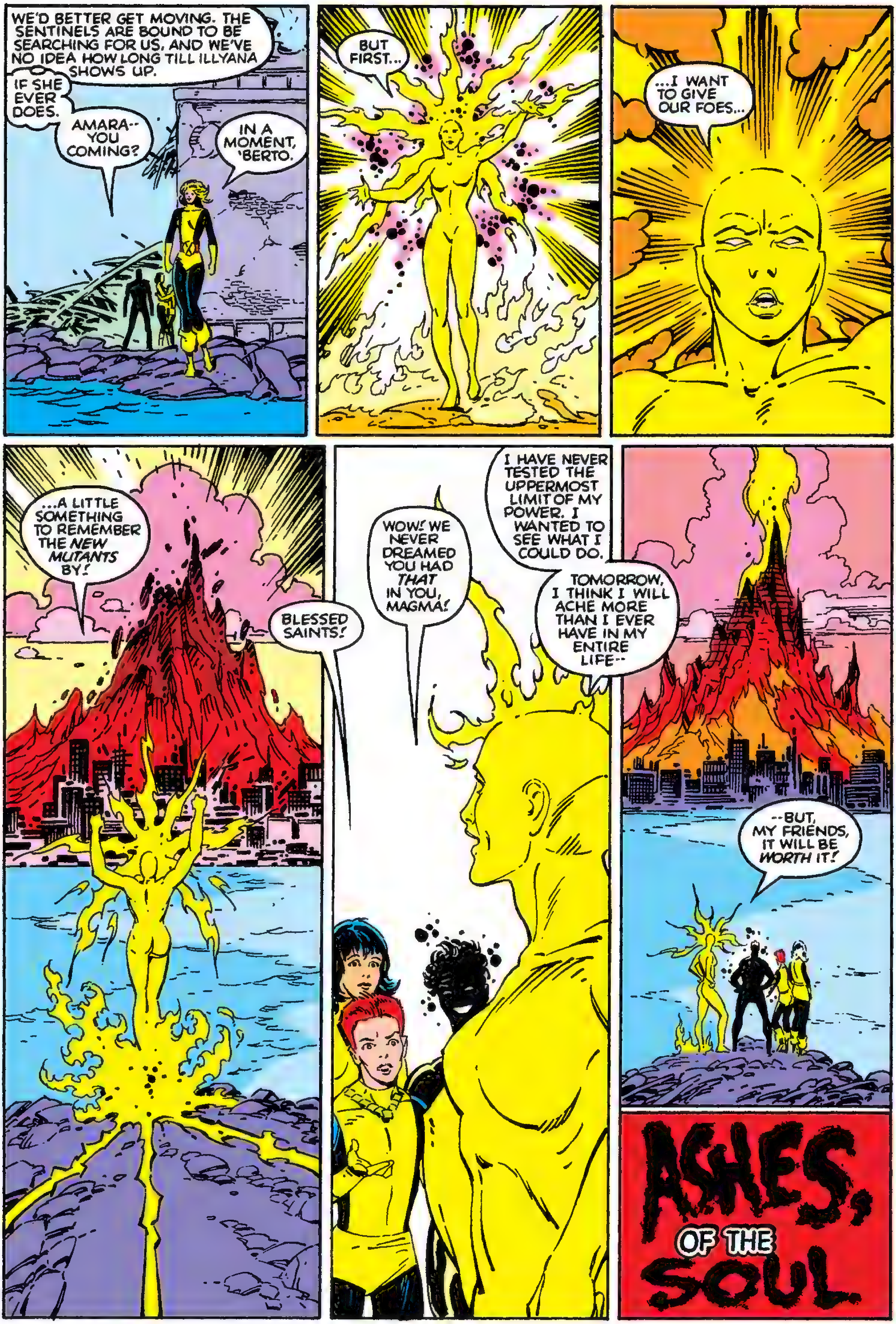

HAND-UNIT'S MAKING ANOTHER PASS.
FEEL A LITTLE DIZZY-- I'M LOSING STRENGTH AS WELL AS BLOOD-- AM I GOING INTO SHOCK?!
NO! WHEN I WAS STAR STRIKER FOR THE VILAR SCHOOL THUNDERBOLTS-- BEFORE I'D EVER HEARD OF THE NEW MUTANTS-- I PLAYED WHEN I WAS HURT. THIS IS NO DIFFERENT.
PASS TO YOU, SAM!
GO FOR THE GOAL!
THOOM!
MEANWHILE...
...WITHIN THE SENTINELS' HEADQUARTERS FACILITY...
WE'LL COMMUNICATE USING OUR SPECIAL MIND-LINK, WOLFSBANE, SO THE SENTINELS WON'T HEAR OUR VOICES.
CLOAKER FIELD BUILT INTO MY OUTFIT'S KEPT US HIDDEN FROM THEIR SENSORS. THEY DON'T KNOW WE'RE HERE.
THERE'S LILA!
DANI, SHE'S ALIVE! WE'RE IN TIME!
SO IT SEEMS.


NOT LIKE THE SENTINELS TO DISPLAY THEIR CAPTIVES SO OBVIOUSLY.
TRAP'S HERE SOMEWHERE. I JUST CAN'T SEE IT.
YOU'VE GOT ME BEAT FOR SPEED AND AGILITY, KIDDO. YOU GRAB LILA...
...WHILE I PROVIDE COVER FIRE!
VDOW!
SQUARK!
ALARM! ALL UNITS, ALL SECTORS--
--INTRUDERS IN MAIN MISSION!
HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT, YOU SPALEEN...
...TO CATCH ME!
DON'T BOAST, GIRL. 'TIS NA' PROPER.
WHY'S THAT LAST ROBOT...
...JUST STANDING THERE?!
I TOLD DANI I'D FIND LILA, NO MATTER HOW WELL SHE WAS HIDDEN.
BOASTFUL WORDS. NOW, I MUST PROVE THEM.
SUPPOSE I'M WRONG?!
NO SECOND CHANCE-- NO TIME TO MAKE CERTAIN--
--IGNORE THIS SENTINEL, DANI!
LILA'S YUIR TARGET!
WHAT--?!
FOR ALL OUR SAKES, TRUST ME NOW THE WAY YOU USED TO, IN HAPPIER DAYS--
--SHOOT LILA!


A SENTINEL!
USING ITS OWN "CLOAK" TO MAKE ITSELF LOOK LIKE LILA!
VAM VAM VAM VAM VAM
BY TRYING TO RESCUE IT, WE'D HAVE MADE OURSELVES PERFECT TARGETS.
AN' HERE'S THE LASS, FOR REAL--
-- HIDDEN WITHIN THIS SENTINEL SHELL!
WHO--?!
WOLFSBANE-- BUT IT CAN'T BE--!?!
YOU SHOULD NA' BE SURPRISED, LILA. WHERE PROFESSOR XAVIER'S STUDENTS ARE CONCERNED...
... ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE!
HOLD TIGHT. IT'LL BE A ROUGH RUN TO DANI.
NO NEED FOR THAT, RAHNE-LUV.
I'VE A FASTER, SAFER WAY.
MERCY -- WE TELEPORTED!
HALE AND HEARTY, SINGER?
MORE SO THAN I DESERVE.
SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, CHIEF. I GOT CARELESS, LAST JAUNT. THAT'S HOW THEY CAUGHT ME.
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
SHALL WE GO?
'BYE, GUYS!
FTASZZSK!


IN ITS WAY, IT'S THE MOST ROUNDABOUT OF ESCAPES--FOR LILA CANNOT TELEPORT AT LESS THAN STELLAR DISTANCES. THE THREE OF THEM JAUNT LIGHT-YEARS ACROSS THE GALAXY AND BACK AGAIN, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE...
...TO WHERE THE OTHERS AWAIT THEM, ON WHAT'S LEFT OF THE JERSEY PALISADES.
ALL RIIIGHT--
--WE BEAT THOSE CHROME CREEPS!
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
HAVEN'T YOU GUESSED, AMARA? THEY GO TO LILA'S WORLD, TO JOIN THOSE THEY'VE RESCUED, WHILE WE GET LEFT BEHIND.
DINNA BOTHER DENYING IT, SAM. I SAW THE TRUTH IN DANI'S THOUGHTS, DURING THE FIGHT--WHEN SHE WAS TOO BUSY TO PROPERLY GUARD THEM FROM ME.
YOU NEVER MEANT TO TAKE US WITH YOU.
NO.
WE HELPED YOU--WE RISKED OUR LIVES--AND THIS IS HOW WE'RE REPAID:
...WITH BETRAYAL?!
WHY?! WHAT HAVE WE DONE...
...TO MAKE YOU TURN ON US?!
YOU WERE RIGHT, SAM. I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED.
YOU AREN'T THE FRIENDS WE KNEW...
...THE TEAMMATES WE CHERISHED.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! IF Y'ALL COME WITH US, YOU WON'T GET BACK TO YOUR PROPER TIME--WE HAVE TO LEAVE YOU HERE, WHERE ILLYANA CAN FIND YOU, SO SHE CAN BRING YOU SAFELY HOME. THAT WAY THE HISTORICAL PATTERN'S PRESERVED.
CHANGE THE PAST, WHO KNOWS HOW IT'LL AFFECT THE FUTURE--OUR PRESENT?!
BUT SAM, THE PAST HAS ALREADY BEEN CHANGED!
YOU TOLD US YOU KNEW WHERE AND WHEN TO SAVE US FROM THE SENTINELS BECAUSE YOU REMEMBERED BEING RESCUED--ONLY YOU WEREN'T WITH US!
HOW CAN YOU REMEMBER SOMETHING THAT--IN OUR TIME STREAM--NEVER HAPPENED?!!
SUPPOSE ILLYANA DOES NOT COME FOR US, MES AMIS--WHAT THEN?
SHE WILL, SHAN.
SHE HAS TO!


OUR ABANDONING THE EARTH ISN'T SALVATION--
--ALL WE'RE DOING IS BUYING OURSELVES TIME!
YOU'RE FOOLS-- AND SO ARE WE, SAM-- IF WE THINK THE SENTINELS WILL STOP HERE.
THEY KNOW WE ESCAPED. THEIR PROGRAMMING WILL MANDATE THAT THEY COME AFTER US.
IT MAY TAKE YEARS, EVEN CENTURIES-- WHAT DO THEY CARE, TIME MEANS NOTHING TO THEM-- BUT THEY WILL COME. I THINK, EVEN IF WE DESTROYED THE EARTH-- NOVA'D THE SUN-- WE COULDN'T STOP THEM.
THE PRESENT IS FINISHED-- AND THE FUTURE AS WELL-- OUR *ONLY* HOPE LIES IN THE PAST.
YOU'VE SEEN WHAT IS-- HAD A BITTER TASTE OF WHAT MIGHT BE--YOU CAN *CHANGE* WHAT WAS.
BUT ONLY IF YOU STAY.
AND SO...
FAREWELL, *MES BRAVES.*
MAY THE LORD FOREVER SMILE ON YOU.
G'BYE, DANI.
TAKE CARE, RAHNE.
MY OTHER SELF.
MY HEART.
ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THING?
WHO CAN SAY, AMARA? BY THE TIME WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN, WHEN OUR PRESENT GROWS INTO WHAT WE NOW THINK OF AS THE FUTURE, IT WILL PROBABLY BE TOO LATE.
I'M *GLAD* WE'RE STAYING!
I *WANT* THIS CHANCE TO FIGHT AND TRY TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD!
I'M *THROUGH* WITH RUNNING, NO MATTER HOW SENSIBLE I'M TOLD IT IS. I'M SICK OF FOREVER PLAYING THE RABBIT! YOU ASK ME, BETTER BY FAR TO RISK EVERYTHING-- AND EVEN PERISH-- IN A NOBLE CAUSE!
EASILY SAID, ROBERT. BUT I HAVE KNOWN DEATH-- THE UNENDING HORROR OF WAR-- ALMOST MY WHOLE LIFE. I BELIEVED, IN AMERICA, I WOULD AT LAST KNOW A LITTLE PEACE. INSTEAD, I HAVE STUMBLED INTO ANOTHER WAR, THAT MAY ALREADY HAVE CLAIMED THE LIVES OF MY BROTHER AND SISTER.
DON'T THINK THAT, SHAN. THEY'RE ALL RIGHT, YOU'LL SEE, EVERYTHING'LL TURN OUT ALL RIGHT.
HOPE FOR THE BEST, RAHNE, NO MATTER WHAT?
AYE! ALWAYS!! SO LONG AS WE *HOPE,* ALL'S NA' LOST!


WE'D BETTER GET MOVING. THE SENTINELS ARE BOUND TO BE SEARCHING FOR US. AND WE'VE NO IDEA HOW LONG TILL ILLYANA SHOWS UP.
IF SHE EVER DOES.
AMARA-- YOU COMING?
IN A MOMENT, 'BERTO.
BUT FIRST...
...I WANT TO GIVE OUR FOES...
...A LITTLE SOMETHING TO REMEMBER THE *NEW MUTANTS* BY!
BLESSED SAINTS!
WOW! WE NEVER DREAMED YOU HAD *THAT* IN YOU, MAGMA!
I HAVE NEVER TESTED THE UPPERMOST LIMIT OF MY POWER. I WANTED TO SEE WHAT I COULD DO.
TOMORROW, I THINK I WILL ACHE MORE THAN I EVER HAVE IN MY ENTIRE LIFE--
--BUT, MY FRIENDS, IT WILL BE *WORTH* IT!
ASHES, OF THE SOUL

MARVEL®
25TH ANNIVERSARY

THE NEW MUTANTS®

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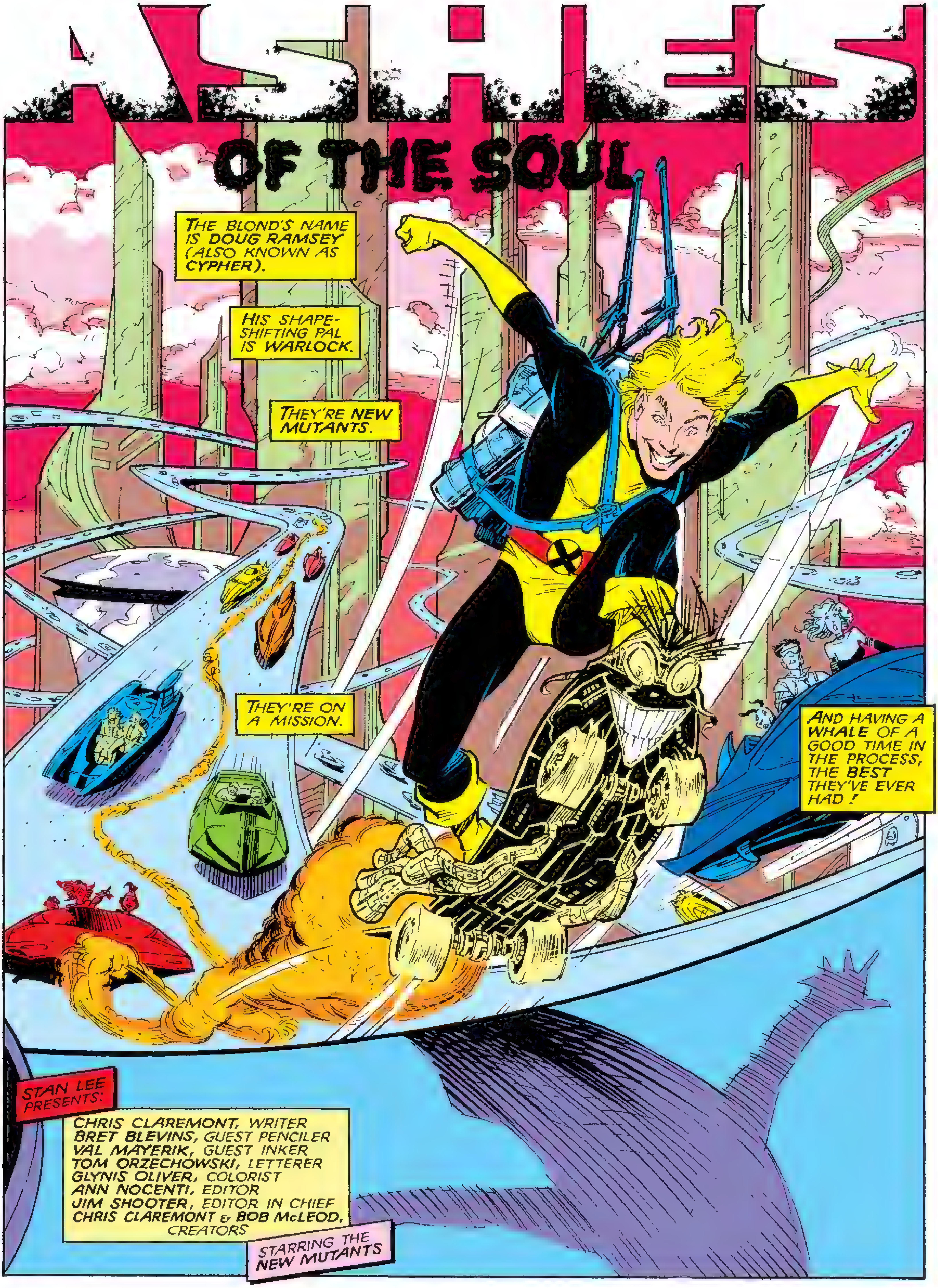
TRAPPED IN THE *FUTURE!*

WHICH FRIEND BETRAYED THEM?!


ASHES OF THE SOUL
THE BLOND'S NAME IS DOUG RAMSEY (ALSO KNOWN AS CYPHER).
HIS SHAPE-SHIFTING PAL IS WARLOCK.
THEY'RE NEW MUTANTS.
THEY'RE ON A MISSION.
AND HAVING A WHALE OF A GOOD TIME IN THE PROCESS, THE BEST THEY'VE EVER HAD!
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
BRET BLEVINS, GUEST PENCILER
VAL MAYERIK, GUEST INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF
CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD, CREATORS
STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS

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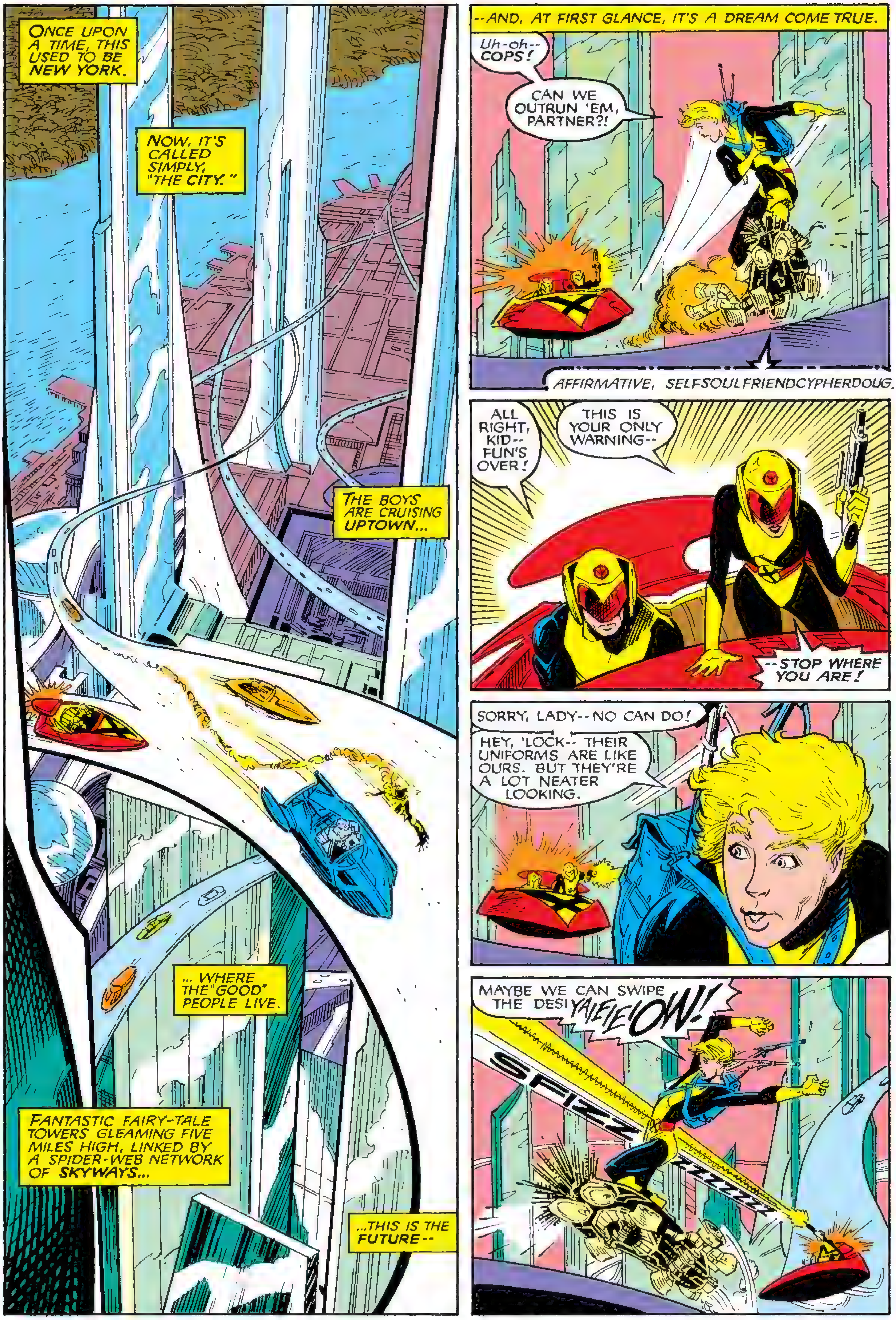
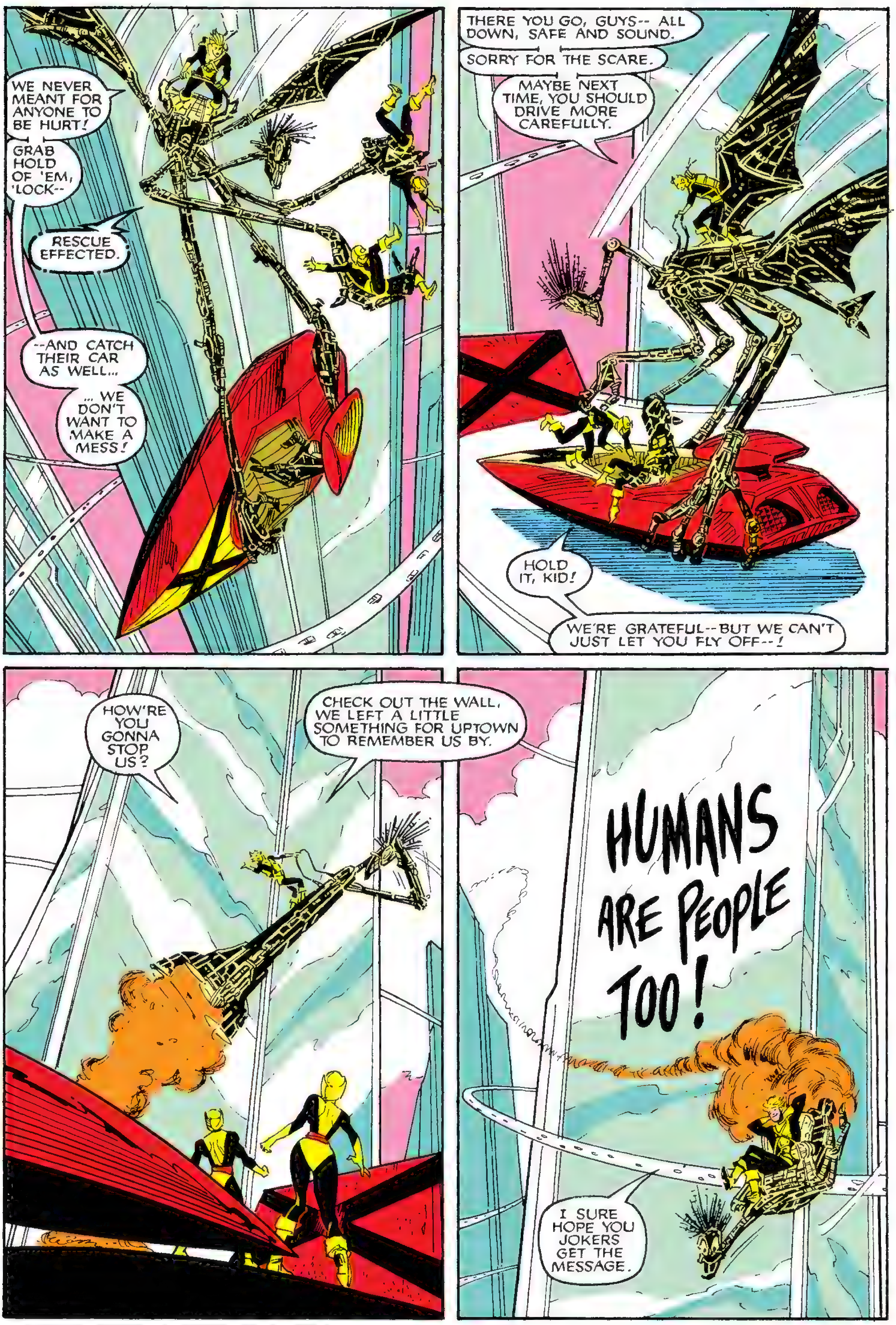
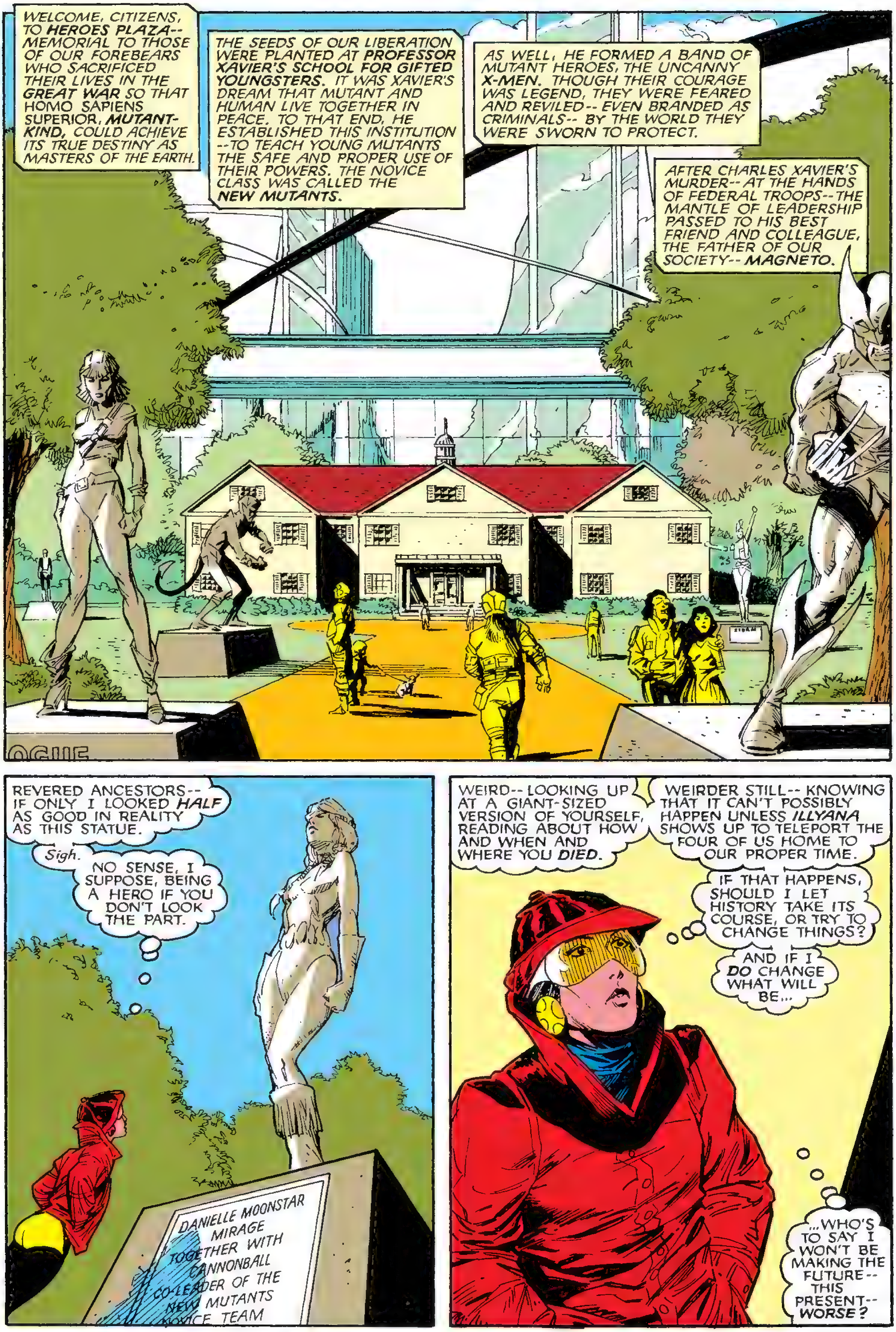
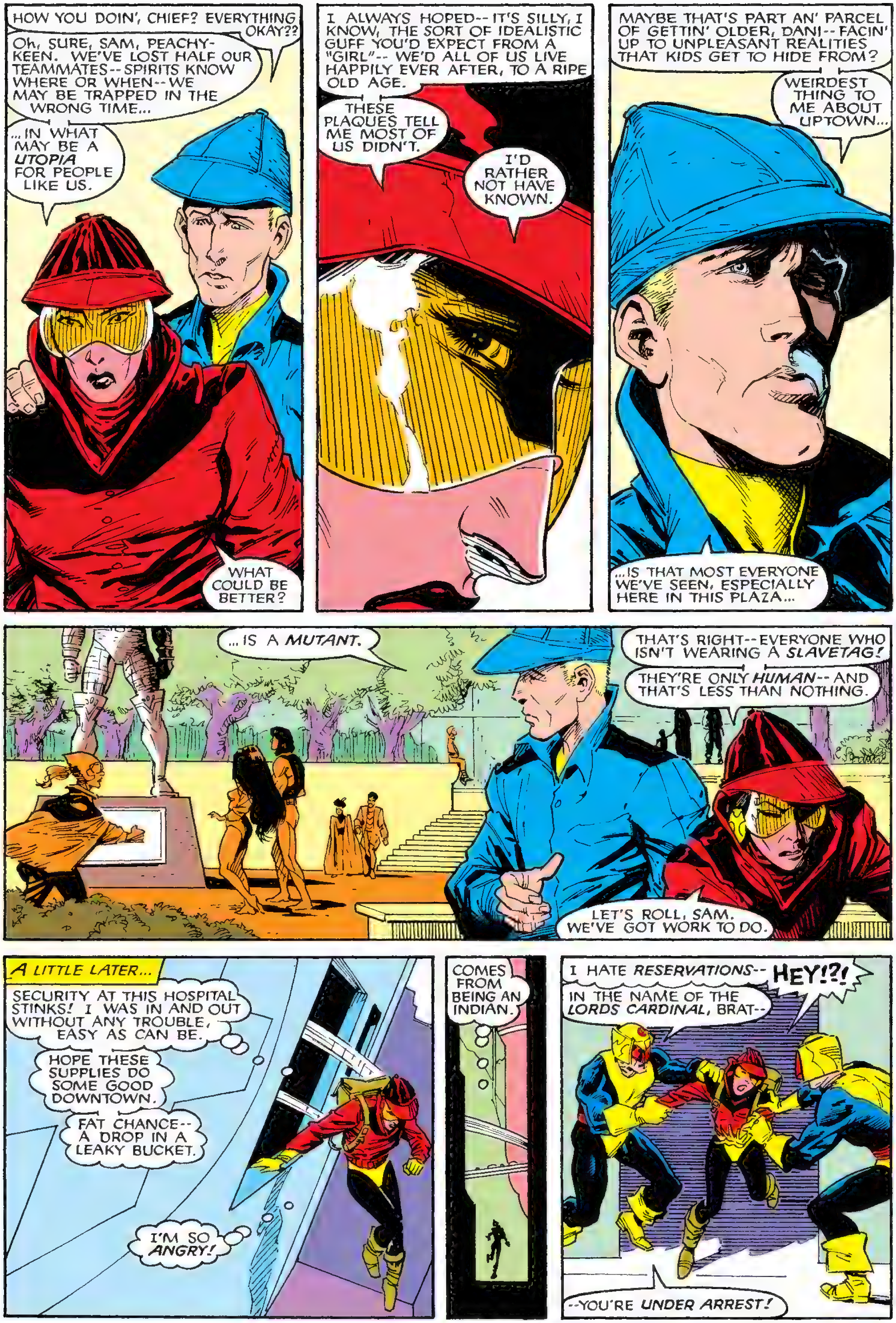
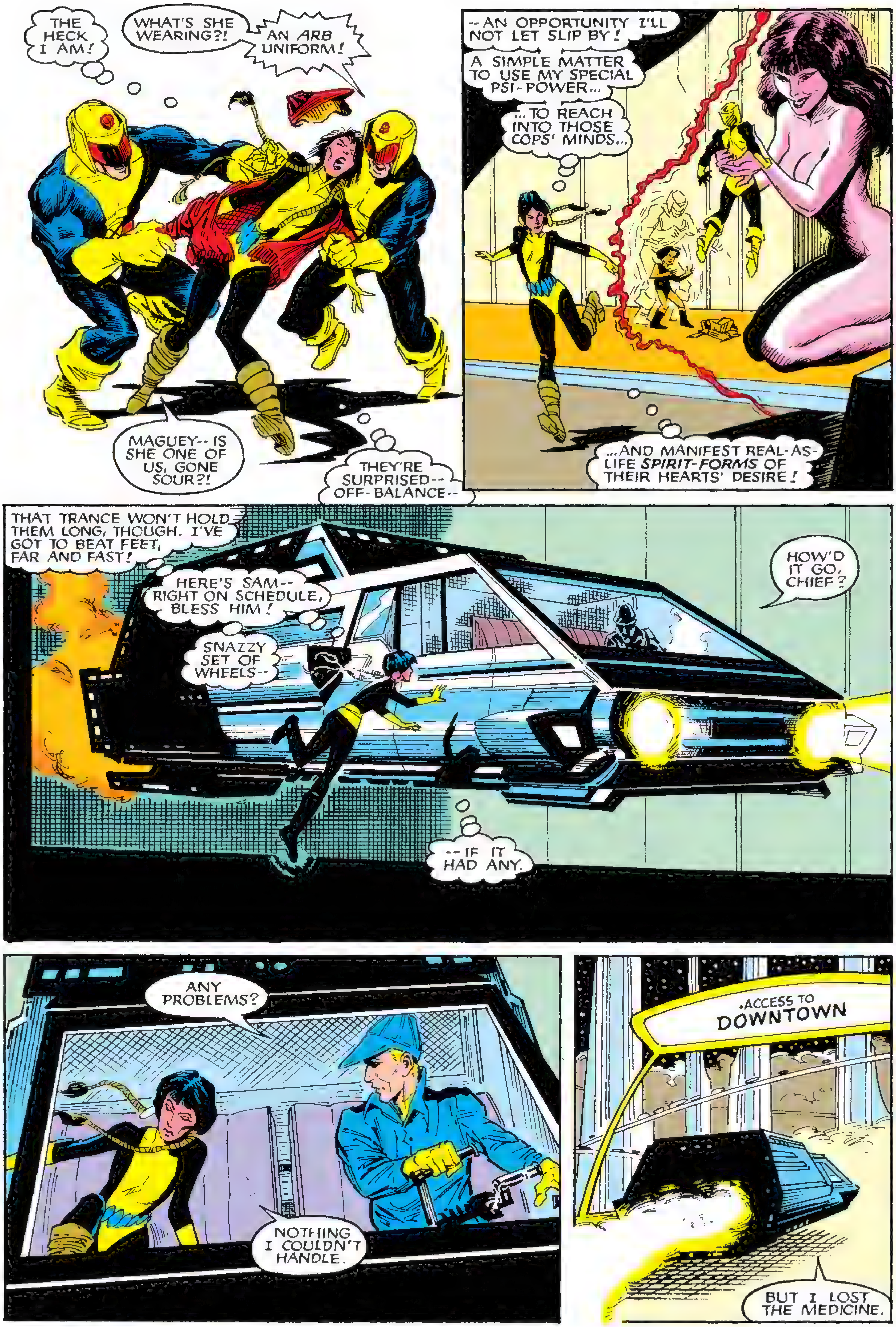

ONCE UPON A TIME, THIS USED TO BE NEW YORK.
NOW, IT'S CALLED SIMPLY, "THE CITY."
THE BOYS ARE CRUISING UPTOWN...
... WHERE THE "GOOD" PEOPLE LIVE.
FANTASTIC FAIRY-TALE TOWERS GLEAMING FIVE MILES HIGH, LINKED BY A SPIDER-WEB NETWORK OF SKYWAYS...
...THIS IS THE FUTURE--
--AND, AT FIRST GLANCE, IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE.
Uh-oh-- COPS!
CAN WE OUTRUN 'EM, PARTNER?!
AFFIRMATIVE, SELFSOULFRIENDCYPHERDOUG.
ALL RIGHT, KID-- FUN'S OVER!
THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING--
--STOP WHERE YOU ARE!
SORRY, LADY--NO CAN DO!
HEY, 'LOCK-- THEIR UNIFORMS ARE LIKE OURS. BUT THEY'RE A LOT NEATER LOOKING.
MAYBE WE CAN SWIPE THE DES!
YAIEIEIEOW!
SFIZZZZZZZ

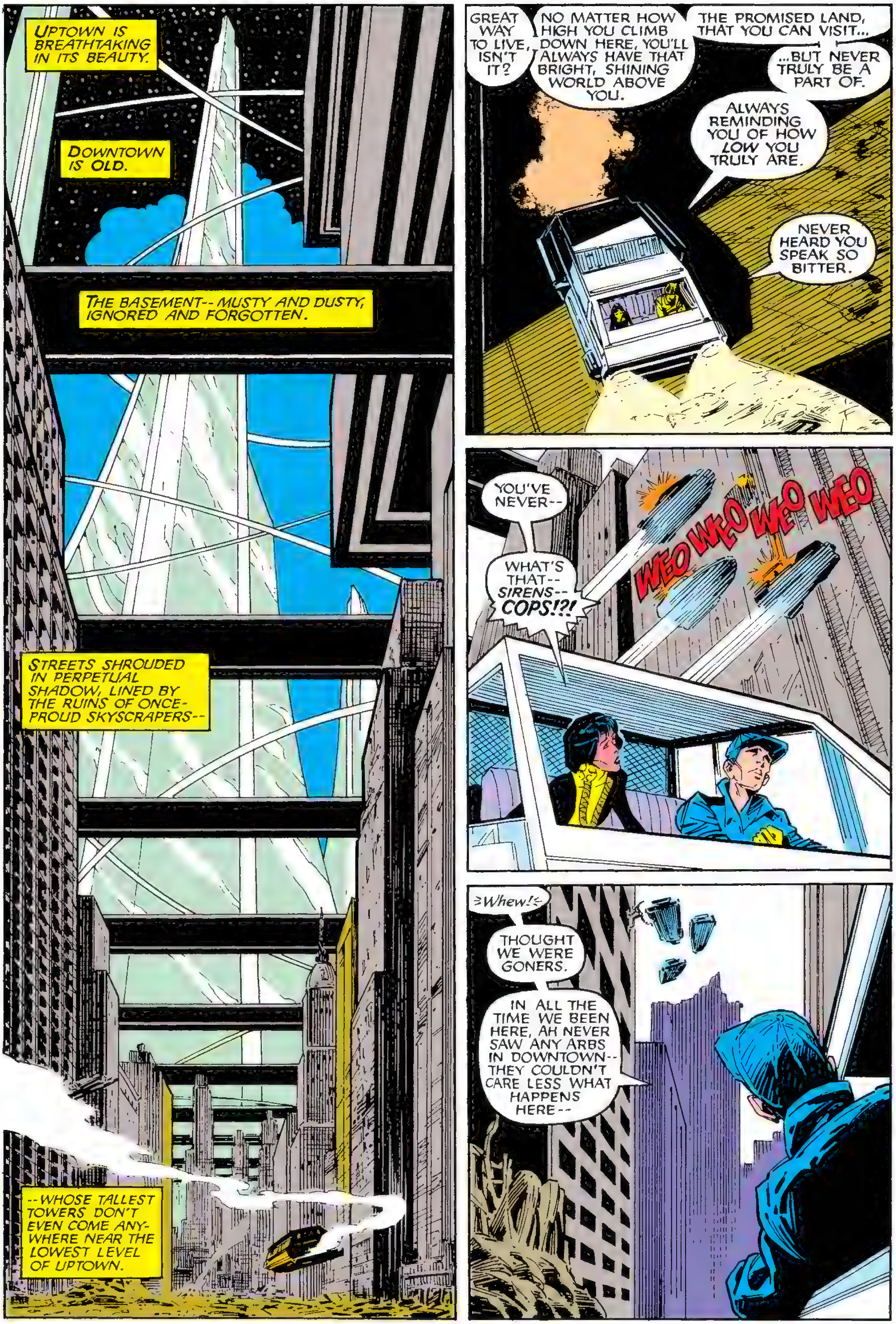
POUR ON THE SPEED, PAL-- THOSE JERKS ARE *SERIOUS*--
--LET'S GET *OUTTA* HERE!
BETTER MANIFEST A *SHIELD*, IN CASE THEIR AIM IMPROVES.
WUGGA-WACKA-WUGGA--
--ALARM-*ALARM*-ALARM, STRUCTURE BLOCKING PRIMARY ESCAPE ROUTE!
--OPTIMAL DEFENSE MODE ENGAGED--
WE *GOT* 'EM!
WAIT'LL I GET MY HANDS ON THAT LITTLE HOOLIGAN...
...I'LL TEACH HIM TO GO AROUND WEARING AN ARBITRATOR'S UNIFORM.
BUT...
SHIFTING TO SECONDARY ROUTE, FLIGHT-EVASION MODE!
YAH-*HWHOO!*
THE SKATEBOARD-- IT TURNED INTO A *FLIER!*
I CAN'T HOLD THE HOVER--
--I'M LOSING CONTROL!
WARLOCK, THOSE COPS HAVE GONE OFF THE ROAD!

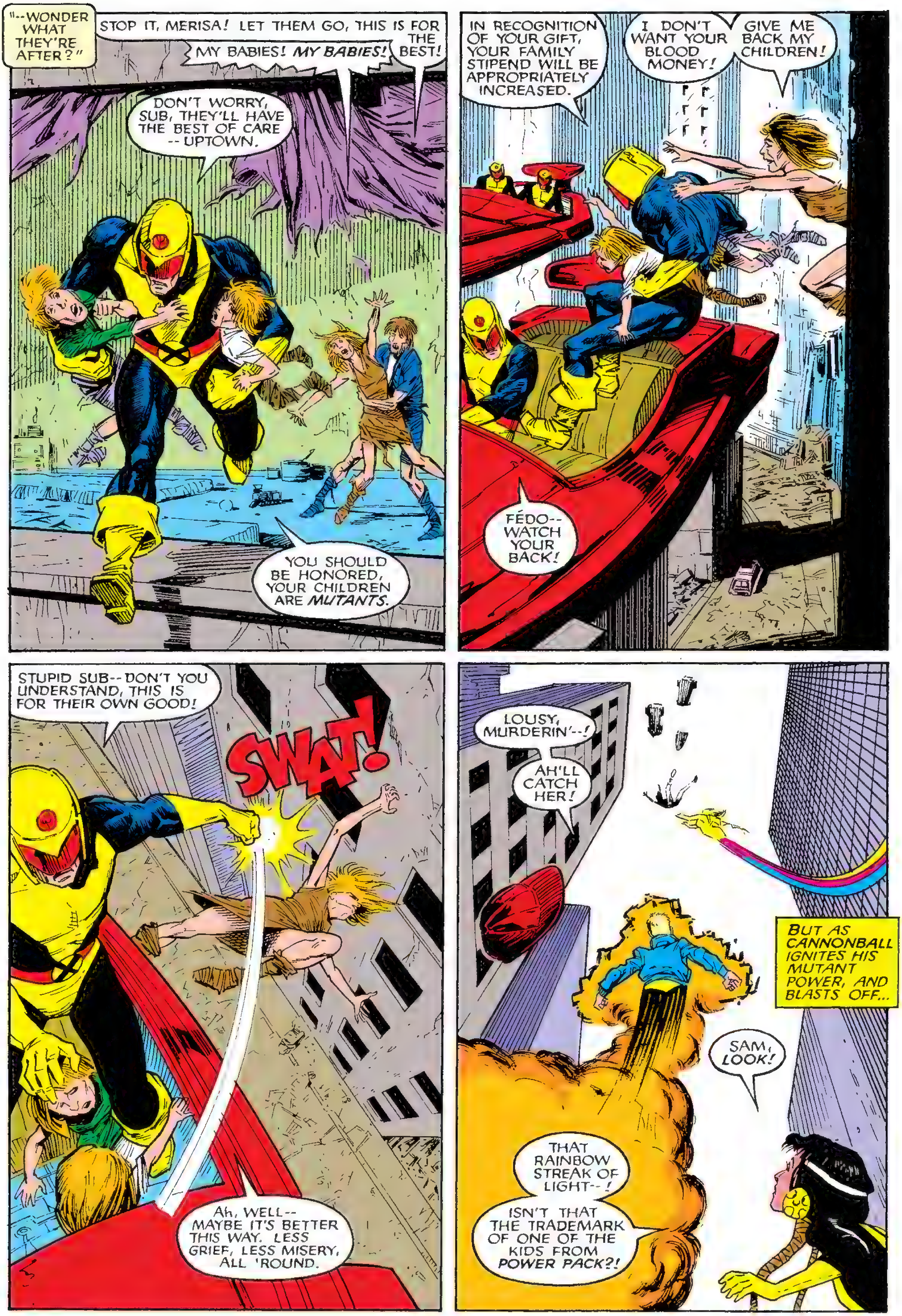

WE NEVER MEANT FOR ANYONE TO BE HURT!
GRAB HOLD OF 'EM, 'LOCK--
RESCUE EFFECTED.
--AND CATCH THEIR CAR AS WELL...
... WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE A MESS!
THERE YOU GO, GUYS-- ALL DOWN, SAFE AND SOUND.
SORRY FOR THE SCARE.
MAYBE NEXT TIME, YOU SHOULD DRIVE MORE CAREFULLY.
HOLD IT, KID!
WE'RE GRATEFUL--BUT WE CAN'T JUST LET YOU FLY OFF--!
HOW'RE YOU GONNA STOP US?
CHECK OUT THE WALL, WE LEFT A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR UPTOWN TO REMEMBER US BY.
HUMANS ARE PEOPLE TOO!
I SURE HOPE YOU JOKERS GET THE MESSAGE.

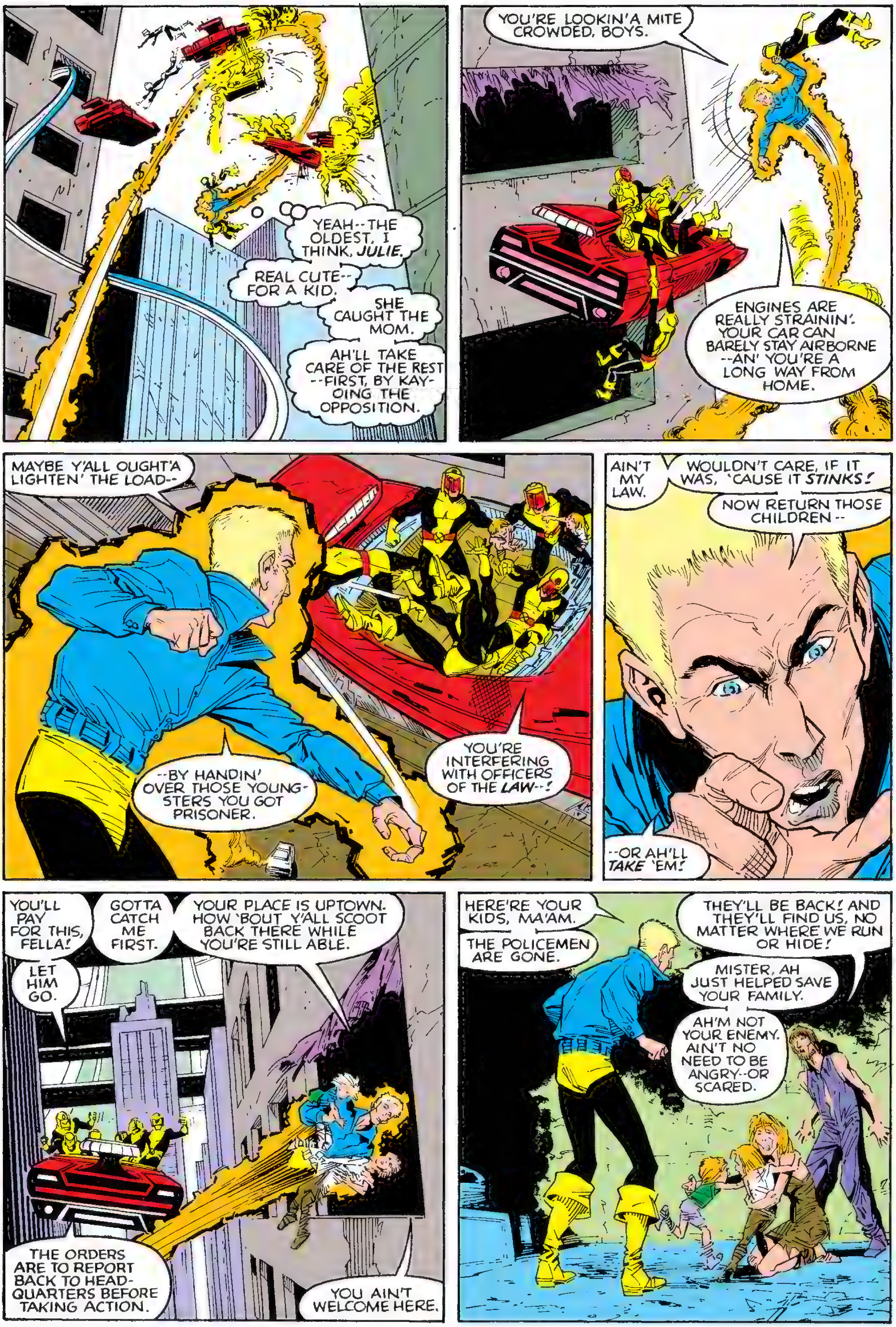

WELCOME, CITIZENS, TO **HEROES PLAZA**-- MEMORIAL TO THOSE OF OUR FOREBEARS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN THE **GREAT WAR** SO THAT HOMO SAPIENS SUPERIOR, **MUTANTKIND,** COULD ACHIEVE ITS TRUE DESTINY AS MASTERS OF THE EARTH.
THE SEEDS OF OUR LIBERATION WERE PLANTED AT **PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.** IT WAS XAVIER'S DREAM THAT MUTANT AND HUMAN LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE. TO THAT END, HE ESTABLISHED THIS INSTITUTION --TO TEACH YOUNG MUTANTS THE SAFE AND PROPER USE OF THEIR POWERS. THE NOVICE CLASS WAS CALLED THE **NEW MUTANTS.**
AS WELL, HE FORMED A BAND OF MUTANT HEROES, THE UNCANNY **X-MEN.** THOUGH THEIR COURAGE WAS LEGEND, THEY WERE FEARED AND REVILED-- EVEN BRANDED AS CRIMINALS-- BY THE WORLD THEY WERE SWORN TO PROTECT.
AFTER CHARLES XAVIER'S MURDER-- AT THE HANDS OF FEDERAL TROOPS--THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP PASSED TO HIS BEST FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, THE FATHER OF OUR SOCIETY-- **MAGNETO.**
OGUE
REVERED ANCESTORS-- IF ONLY I LOOKED ***HALF*** AS GOOD IN REALITY AS THIS STATUE.
Sigh.
NO SENSE, I SUPPOSE, BEING A HERO IF YOU DON'T LOOK THE PART.
DANIELLE MOONSTAR
MIRAGE
TOGETHER WITH
CANNONBALL
CO-LEADER OF THE
NEW MUTANTS
NOVICE TEAM
WEIRD-- LOOKING UP AT A GIANT-SIZED VERSION OF YOURSELF, READING ABOUT HOW AND WHEN AND WHERE YOU ***DIED.***
WEIRDER STILL-- KNOWING THAT IT CAN'T POSSIBLY HAPPEN UNLESS ***ILLYANA*** SHOWS UP TO TELEPORT THE FOUR OF US HOME TO OUR PROPER TIME.
IF THAT HAPPENS, SHOULD I LET HISTORY TAKE ITS COURSE, OR TRY TO CHANGE THINGS?
AND IF I ***DO*** CHANGE WHAT WILL BE...
...WHO'S TO SAY I WON'T BE MAKING THE FUTURE-- THIS PRESENT-- ***WORSE?***

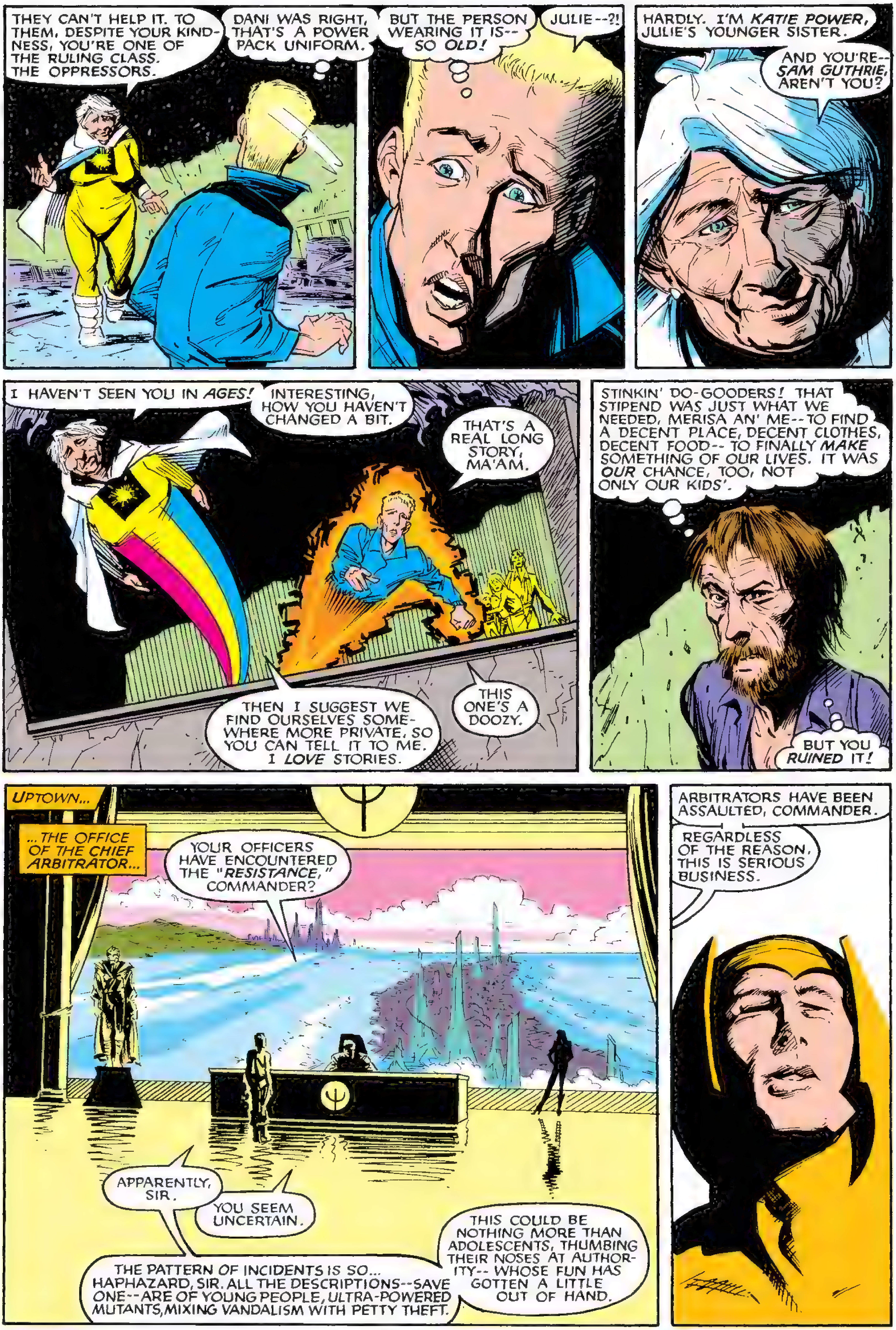

HOW YOU DOIN', CHIEF? EVERYTHING OKAY??
Oh, SURE, SAM, PEACHY-KEEN. WE'VE LOST HALF OUR TEAMMATES--SPIRITS KNOW WHERE OR WHEN--WE MAY BE TRAPPED IN THE WRONG TIME...
...IN WHAT MAY BE A *UTOPIA* FOR PEOPLE LIKE US.
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?
I ALWAYS HOPED--IT'S SILLY, I KNOW, THE SORT OF IDEALISTIC GUFF YOU'D EXPECT FROM A "GIRL"--WE'D ALL OF US LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER, TO A RIPE OLD AGE.
THESE PLAQUES TELL ME MOST OF US DIDN'T.
I'D RATHER NOT HAVE KNOWN.
MAYBE THAT'S PART AN' PARCEL OF GETTIN' OLDER, DANI--FACIN' UP TO UNPLEASANT REALITIES THAT KIDS GET TO HIDE FROM?
WEIRDEST THING TO ME ABOUT UPTOWN...
...IS THAT MOST EVERYONE WE'VE SEEN, ESPECIALLY HERE IN THIS PLAZA...
...IS A *MUTANT*.
THAT'S RIGHT--EVERYONE WHO ISN'T WEARING A *SLAVETAG!*
THEY'RE ONLY *HUMAN*--AND THAT'S LESS THAN NOTHING.
LET'S ROLL, SAM. WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.
A LITTLE LATER...
SECURITY AT THIS HOSPITAL STINKS! I WAS IN AND OUT WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE, EASY AS CAN BE.
HOPE THESE SUPPLIES DO SOME GOOD DOWNTOWN.
FAT CHANCE--A DROP IN A LEAKY BUCKET.
I'M SO *ANGRY!*
COMES FROM BEING AN INDIAN.
I HATE *RESERVATIONS*--
HEY!?!
IN THE NAME OF THE *LORDS CARDINAL*, BRAT--
--YOU'RE *UNDER ARREST!*

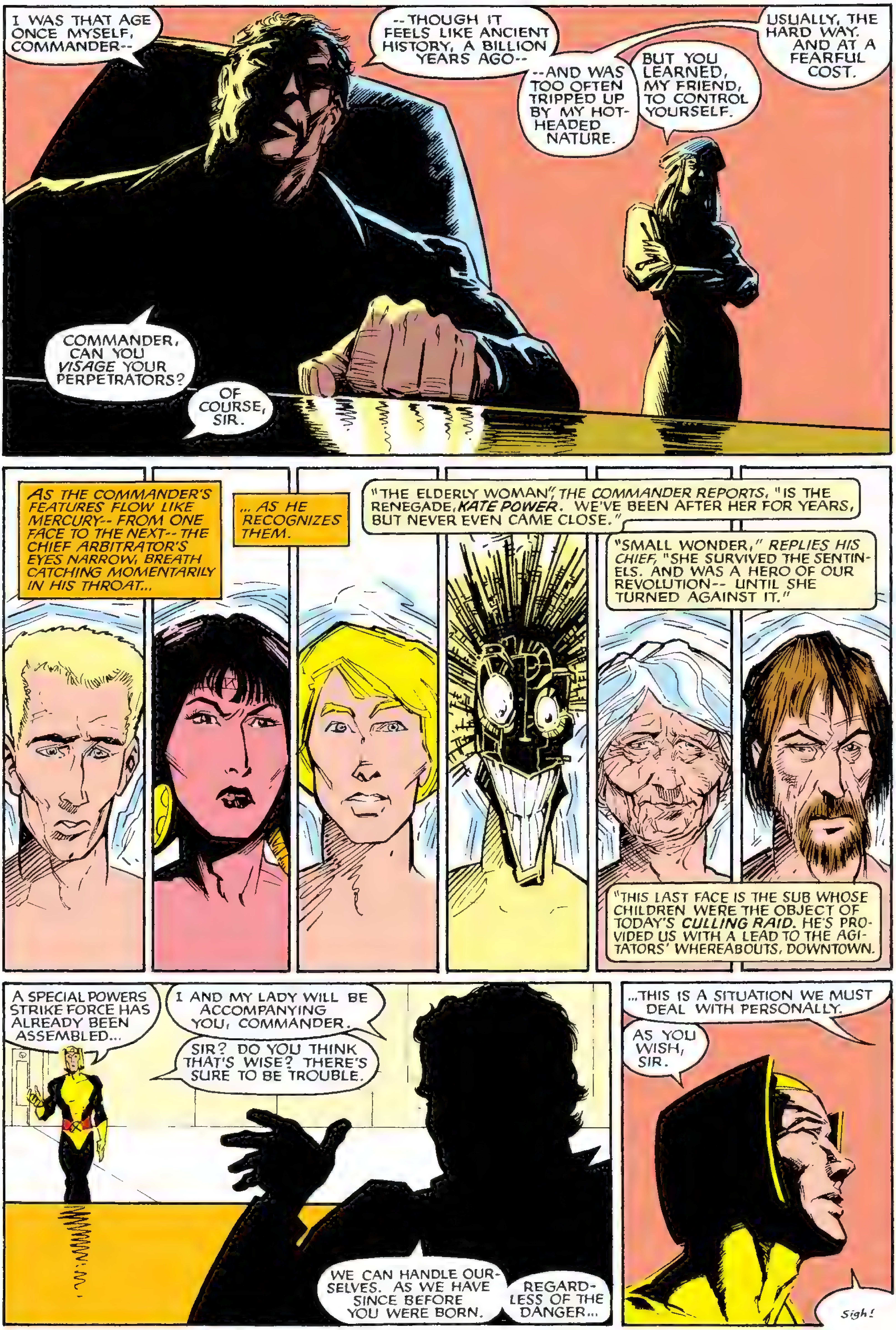

THE HECK I AM!
WHAT'S SHE WEARING?!
AN *ARB* UNIFORM!
MAGUEY-- IS SHE ONE OF US, GONE SOUR?!
THEY'RE SURPRISED-- OFF-BALANCE--
--AN OPPORTUNITY I'LL NOT LET SLIP BY!
A SIMPLE MATTER TO USE MY SPECIAL PSI-POWER...
...TO REACH INTO THOSE COPS' MINDS...
...AND MANIFEST REAL-AS-LIFE *SPIRIT-FORMS* OF THEIR HEARTS' DESIRE!
THAT TRANCE WON'T HOLD THEM LONG, THOUGH. I'VE GOT TO BEAT FEET, FAR AND FAST!
HERE'S SAM-- RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, BLESS HIM!
SNAZZY SET OF WHEELS--
--IF IT HAD ANY.
HOW'D IT GO, CHIEF?
ANY PROBLEMS?
NOTHING I COULDN'T HANDLE.
ACCESS TO DOWNTOWN
BUT I LOST THE MEDICINE.

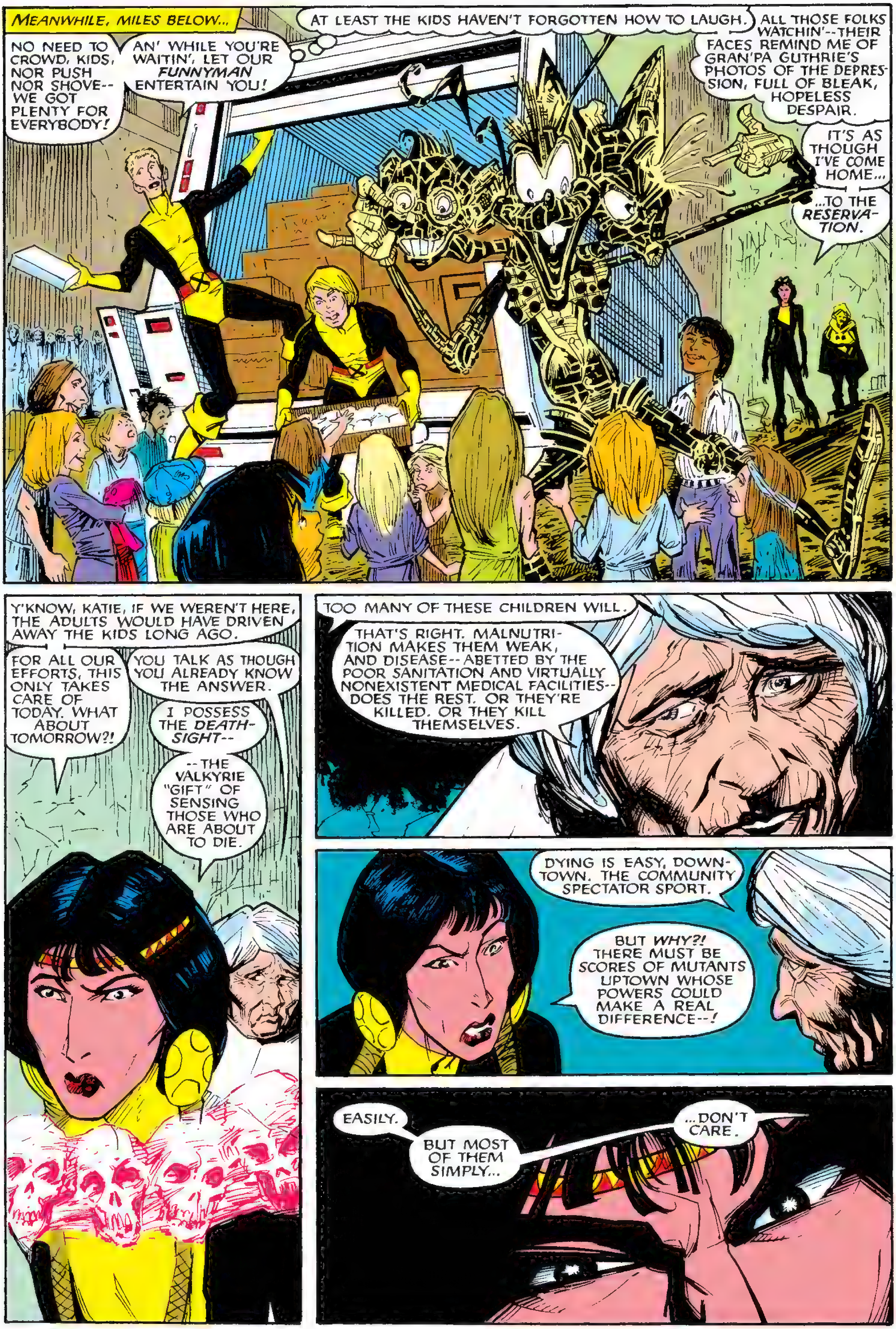

UPTOWN IS BREATHTAKING IN ITS BEAUTY.
DOWNTOWN IS OLD.
THE BASEMENT-- MUSTY AND DUSTY, IGNORED AND FORGOTTEN.
STREETS SHROUDED IN PERPETUAL SHADOW, LINED BY THE RUINS OF ONCE-PROUD SKYSCRAPERS--
--WHOSE TALLEST TOWERS DON'T EVEN COME ANYWHERE NEAR THE LOWEST LEVEL OF UPTOWN.
GREAT WAY TO LIVE, ISN'T IT?
NO MATTER HOW HIGH YOU CLIMB DOWN HERE, YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE THAT BRIGHT, SHINING WORLD ABOVE YOU.
THE PROMISED LAND, THAT YOU CAN VISIT...
...BUT NEVER TRULY BE A PART OF.
ALWAYS REMINDING YOU OF HOW LOW YOU TRULY ARE.
NEVER HEARD YOU SPEAK SO BITTER.
YOU'VE NEVER--
WHAT'S THAT-- SIRENS-- COPS!?!
WEO WEO WEO WEO
Whew!
THOUGHT WE WERE GONERS.
IN ALL THE TIME WE BEEN HERE, AH NEVER SAW ANY ARBS IN DOWNTOWN-- THEY COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT HAPPENS HERE--

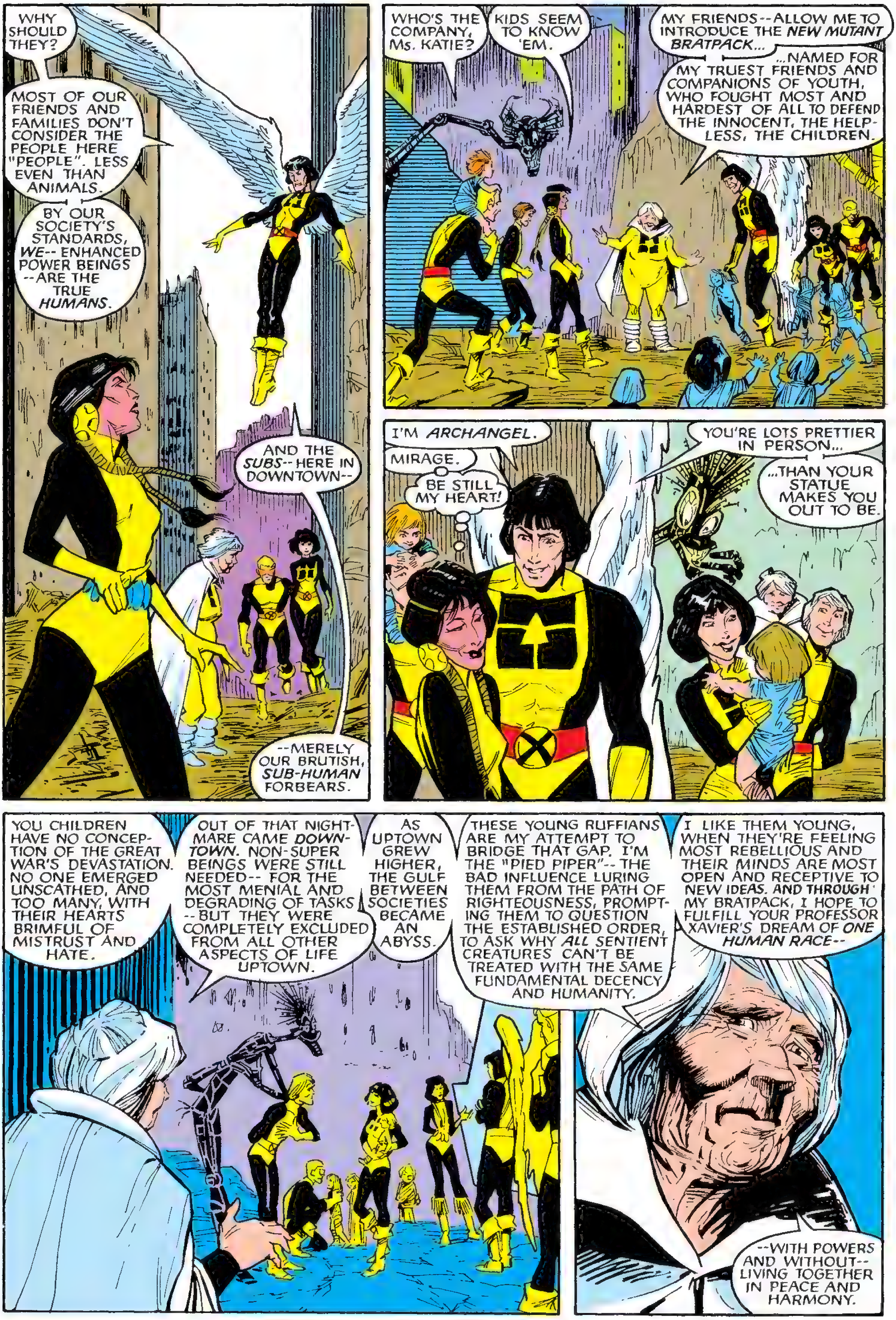

"--WONDER WHAT THEY'RE AFTER?"
STOP IT, MERISA! LET THEM GO, THIS IS FOR THE BEST!
MY BABIES! *MY BABIES!*
DON'T WORRY, SUB, THEY'LL HAVE THE BEST OF CARE -- UPTOWN.
YOU SHOULD BE HONORED, YOUR CHILDREN ARE *MUTANTS*.
IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR GIFT, YOUR FAMILY STIPEND WILL BE APPROPRIATELY INCREASED.
I DON'T WANT YOUR BLOOD MONEY!
GIVE ME BACK MY CHILDREN!
FÉDO-- WATCH YOUR BACK!
STUPID SUB-- DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, THIS IS FOR THEIR OWN GOOD!
SWAT!
Ah, WELL-- MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. LESS GRIEF, LESS MISERY, ALL 'ROUND.
LOUSY, MURDERIN'--!
AH'LL CATCH HER!
BUT AS CANNONBALL IGNITES HIS MUTANT POWER, AND BLASTS OFF...
SAM, LOOK!
THAT RAINBOW STREAK OF LIGHT--!
ISN'T THAT THE TRADEMARK OF ONE OF THE KIDS FROM *POWER PACK?!*

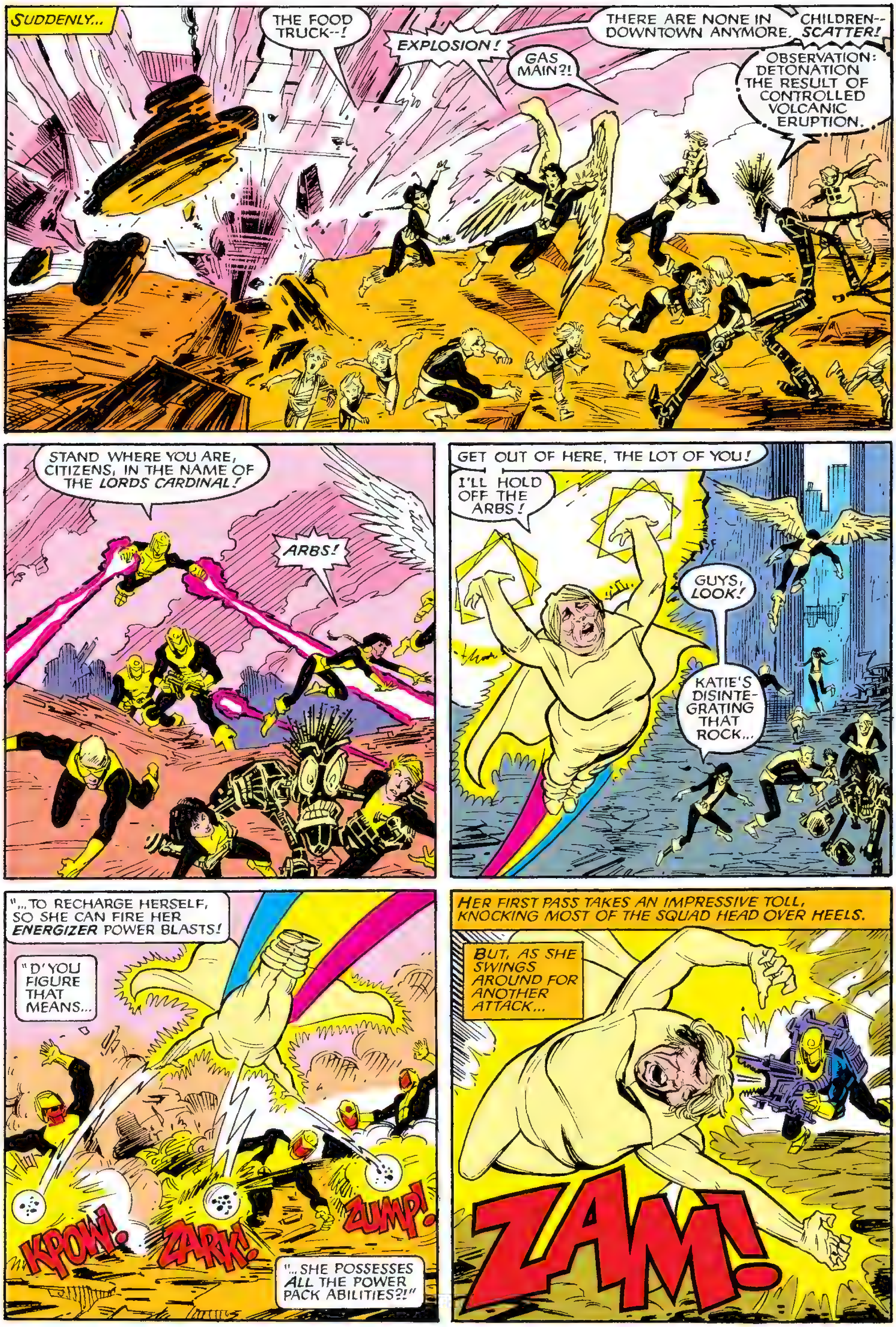

YEAH--THE OLDEST, I THINK, *JULIE*.
REAL CUTE--FOR A KID.
SHE CAUGHT THE MOM.
AH'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST--FIRST, BY KAY-OING THE OPPOSITION.
YOU'RE LOOKIN' A MITE CROWDED, BOYS.
ENGINES ARE REALLY STRAININ'. YOUR CAR CAN BARELY STAY AIRBORNE --AN' YOU'RE A LONG WAY FROM HOME.
MAYBE Y'ALL OUGHT'A LIGHTEN' THE LOAD--
--BY HANDIN' OVER THOSE YOUNGSTERS YOU GOT PRISONER.
YOU'RE INTERFERING WITH OFFICERS OF THE *LAW*--!
AIN'T MY LAW.
WOULDN'T CARE, IF IT WAS, 'CAUSE IT *STINKS!*
NOW RETURN THOSE CHILDREN--
--OR AH'LL *TAKE* 'EM!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, FELLA!
GOTTA CATCH ME FIRST.
YOUR PLACE IS UPTOWN. HOW 'BOUT Y'ALL SCOOT BACK THERE WHILE YOU'RE STILL ABLE.
LET HIM GO.
THE ORDERS ARE TO REPORT BACK TO HEADQUARTERS BEFORE TAKING ACTION.
YOU AIN'T WELCOME HERE.
HERE'RE YOUR KIDS, MA'AM.
THE POLICEMEN ARE GONE.
THEY'LL BE BACK! AND THEY'LL FIND US, NO MATTER WHERE WE RUN OR HIDE!
MISTER, AH JUST HELPED SAVE YOUR FAMILY.
AH'M NOT YOUR ENEMY. AIN'T NO NEED TO BE ANGRY--OR SCARED.

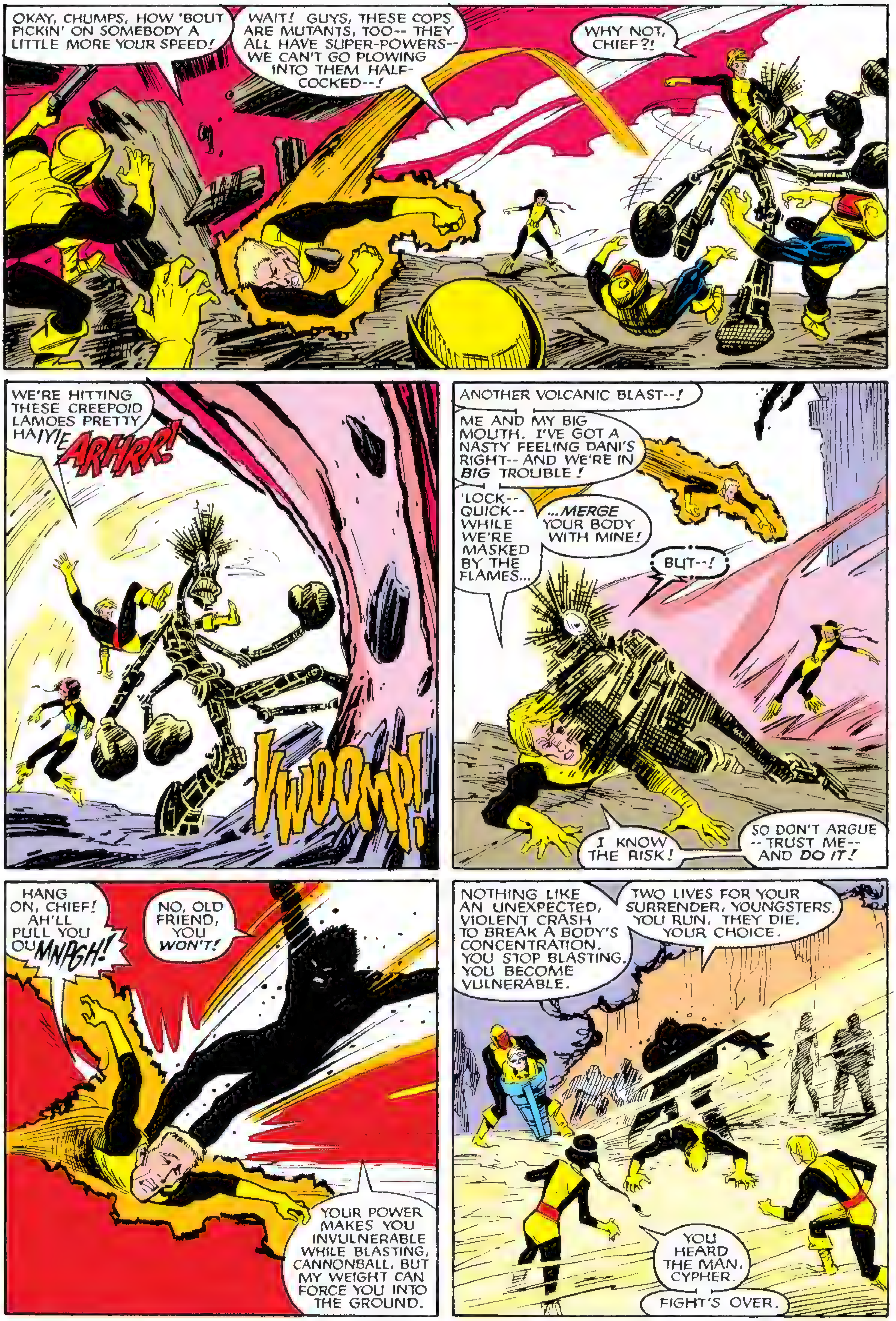

THEY CAN'T HELP IT. TO THEM, DESPITE YOUR KINDNESS, YOU'RE ONE OF THE RULING CLASS. THE OPPRESSORS.
DANI WAS RIGHT, THAT'S A POWER PACK UNIFORM.
BUT THE PERSON WEARING IT IS-- SO *OLD!*
JULIE--?!
HARDLY. I'M *KATIE POWER,* JULIE'S YOUNGER SISTER.
AND YOU'RE-- *SAM GUTHRIE,* AREN'T YOU?
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN *AGES!*
INTERESTING, HOW YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
THAT'S A REAL LONG STORY, MA'AM.
THEN I SUGGEST WE FIND OURSELVES SOMEWHERE MORE PRIVATE, SO YOU CAN TELL IT TO ME. I *LOVE* STORIES.
THIS ONE'S A DOOZY.
STINKIN' DO-GOODERS! THAT STIPEND WAS JUST WHAT WE NEEDED, MERISA AN' ME--TO FIND A DECENT PLACE, DECENT CLOTHES, DECENT FOOD-- TO FINALLY *MAKE* SOMETHING OF OUR LIVES. IT WAS *OUR* CHANCE, TOO, NOT ONLY OUR KIDS'.
BUT YOU *RUINED* IT!
UPTOWN...
...THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ARBITRATOR...
YOUR OFFICERS HAVE ENCOUNTERED THE "*RESISTANCE,*" COMMANDER?
APPARENTLY, SIR.
YOU SEEM UNCERTAIN.
THE PATTERN OF INCIDENTS IS SO... HAPHAZARD, SIR. ALL THE DESCRIPTIONS--SAVE ONE--ARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE, *ULTRA-POWERED* MUTANTS, MIXING VANDALISM WITH PETTY THEFT.
THIS COULD BE NOTHING MORE THAN ADOLESCENTS, THUMBING THEIR NOSES AT AUTHORITY-- WHOSE FUN HAS GOTTEN A LITTLE OUT OF HAND.
ARBITRATORS HAVE BEEN ASSAULTED, COMMANDER.
REGARDLESS OF THE REASON, THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS.

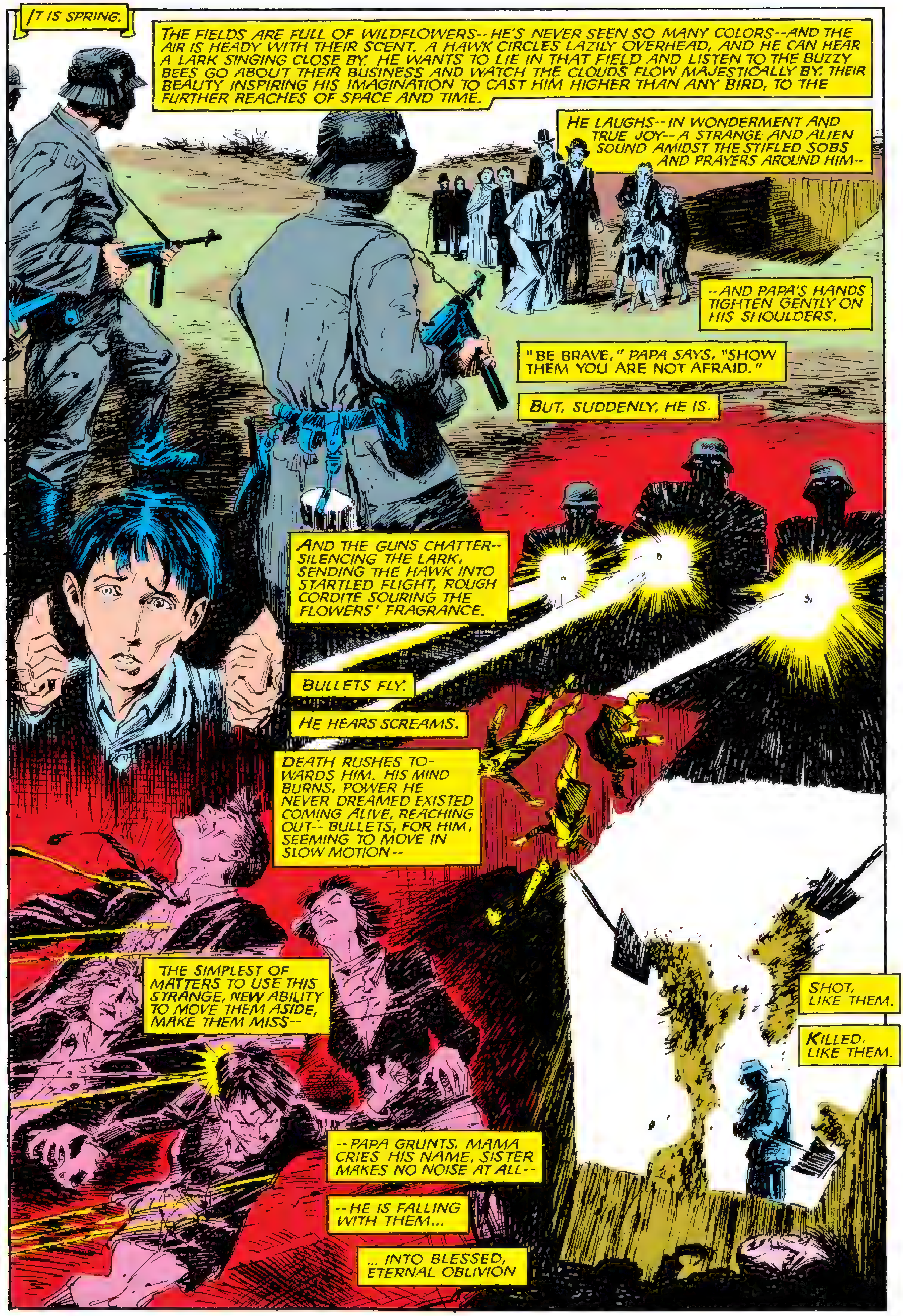

I WAS THAT AGE ONCE MYSELF, COMMANDER--
--THOUGH IT FEELS LIKE ANCIENT HISTORY, A BILLION YEARS AGO--
--AND WAS TOO OFTEN TRIPPED UP BY MY HOT-HEADED NATURE.
BUT YOU LEARNED, MY FRIEND, TO CONTROL YOURSELF.
USUALLY, THE HARD WAY. AND AT A FEARFUL COST.
COMMANDER, CAN YOU *VISAGE* YOUR PERPETRATORS?
OF COURSE, SIR.
AS THE COMMANDER'S FEATURES FLOW LIKE MERCURY-- FROM ONE FACE TO THE NEXT-- THE CHIEF ARBITRATOR'S EYES NARROW, BREATH CATCHING MOMENTARILY IN HIS THROAT...
... AS HE RECOGNIZES THEM.
"THE ELDERLY WOMAN," *THE COMMANDER REPORTS,* "IS THE RENEGADE, ***KATE POWER***. WE'VE BEEN AFTER HER FOR YEARS, BUT NEVER EVEN CAME CLOSE."
"SMALL WONDER," *REPLIES HIS CHIEF,* "SHE SURVIVED THE SENTINELS. AND WAS A HERO OF OUR REVOLUTION-- UNTIL SHE TURNED AGAINST IT."
"THIS LAST FACE IS THE SUB WHOSE CHILDREN WERE THE OBJECT OF TODAY'S ***CULLING RAID.*** HE'S PROVIDED US WITH A LEAD TO THE AGITATORS' WHEREABOUTS, DOWNTOWN.
A SPECIAL POWERS STRIKE FORCE HAS ALREADY BEEN ASSEMBLED...
I AND MY LADY WILL BE ACCOMPANYING YOU, COMMANDER.
SIR? DO YOU THINK THAT'S WISE? THERE'S SURE TO BE TROUBLE.
WE CAN HANDLE OURSELVES. AS WE HAVE SINCE BEFORE YOU WERE BORN.
REGARDLESS OF THE DANGER...
...THIS IS A SITUATION WE MUST DEAL WITH PERSONALLY.
AS YOU WISH, SIR.
Sigh!

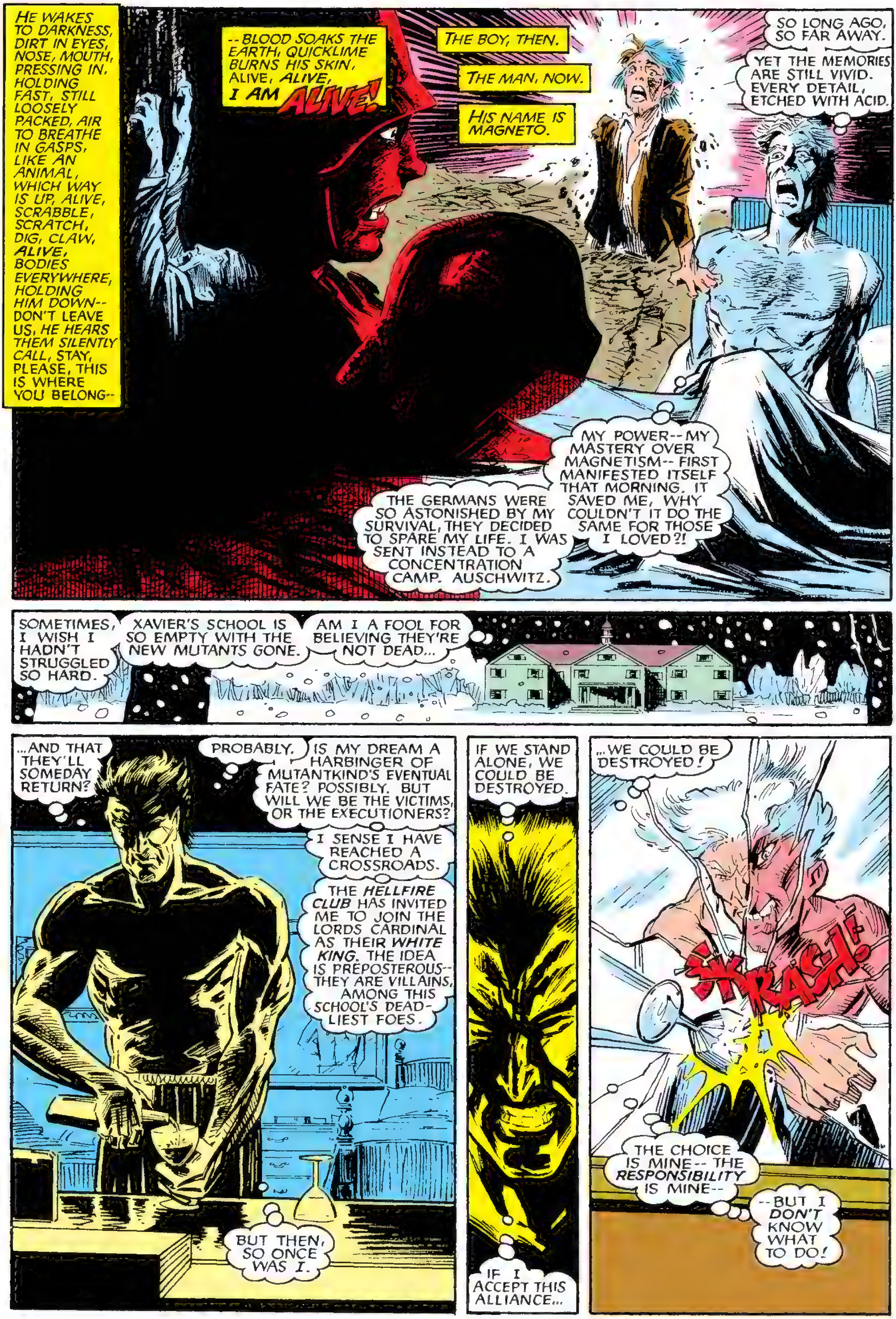

MEANWHILE, MILES BELOW...
NO NEED TO CROWD, KIDS, NOR PUSH NOR SHOVE-- WE GOT PLENTY FOR EVERYBODY!
AN' WHILE YOU'RE WAITIN', LET OUR *FUNNYMAN* ENTERTAIN YOU!
AT LEAST THE KIDS HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN HOW TO LAUGH.
ALL THOSE FOLKS WATCHIN'--THEIR FACES REMIND ME OF GRAN'PA GUTHRIE'S PHOTOS OF THE DEPRESSION, FULL OF BLEAK, HOPELESS DESPAIR.
IT'S AS THOUGH I'VE COME HOME...
...TO THE *RESERVATION.*
Y'KNOW, KATIE, IF WE WEREN'T HERE, THE ADULTS WOULD HAVE DRIVEN AWAY THE KIDS LONG AGO.
FOR ALL OUR EFFORTS, THIS ONLY TAKES CARE OF TODAY. WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW?!
YOU TALK AS THOUGH YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER.
I POSSESS THE *DEATH-SIGHT*--
--THE VALKYRIE "GIFT" OF SENSING THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE.
TOO MANY OF THESE CHILDREN WILL.
THAT'S RIGHT. MALNUTRITION MAKES THEM WEAK, AND DISEASE--ABETTED BY THE POOR SANITATION AND VIRTUALLY NONEXISTENT MEDICAL FACILITIES--DOES THE REST. OR THEY'RE KILLED. OR THEY KILL THEMSELVES.
DYING IS EASY, DOWNTOWN. THE COMMUNITY SPECTATOR SPORT.
BUT *WHY?!* THERE MUST BE SCORES OF MUTANTS UPTOWN WHOSE POWERS COULD MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE--!
EASILY.
BUT MOST OF THEM SIMPLY...
...DON'T CARE.

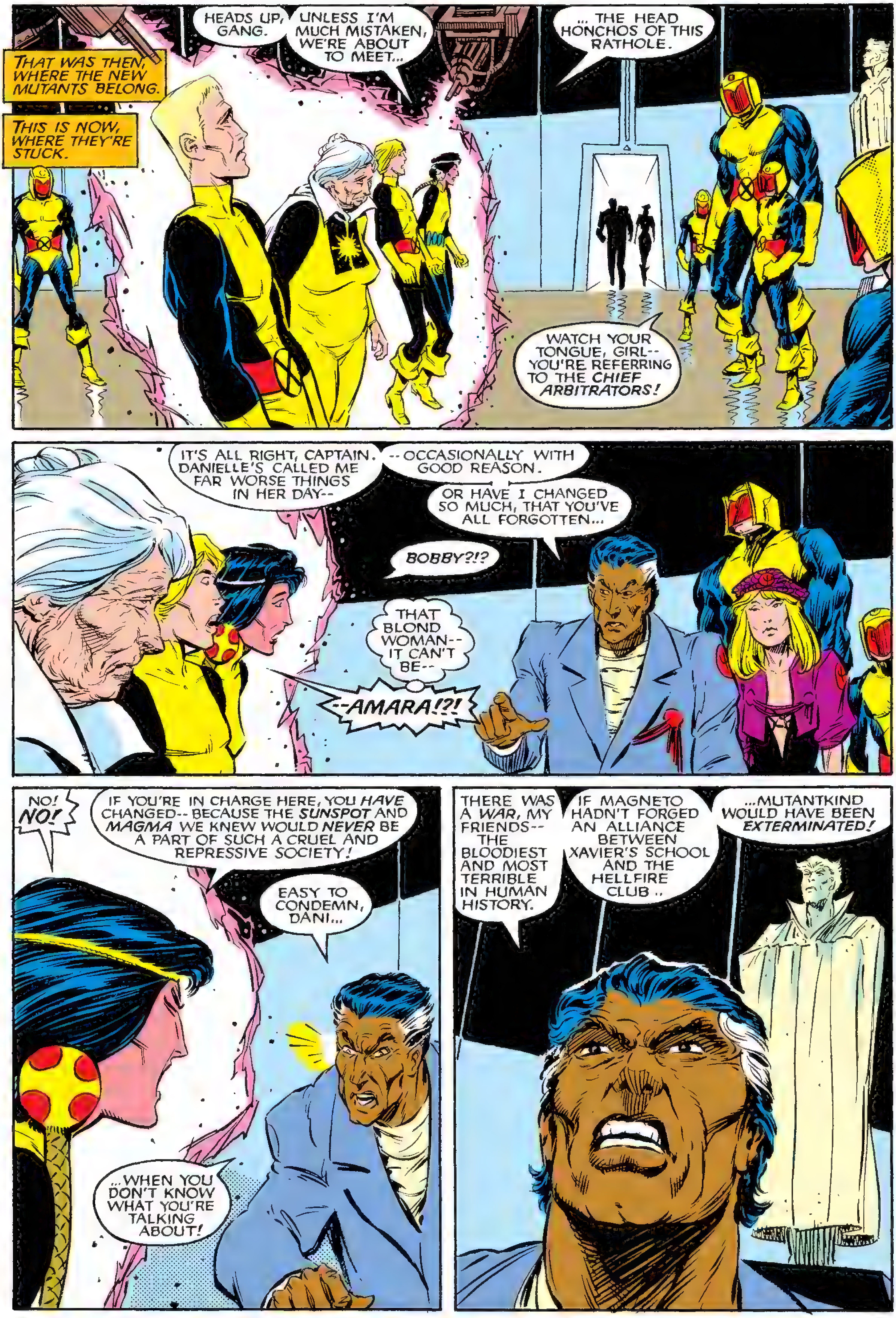

WHY SHOULD THEY?
MOST OF OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES DON'T CONSIDER THE PEOPLE HERE "PEOPLE". LESS EVEN THAN ANIMALS.
BY OUR SOCIETY'S STANDARDS, *WE*-- ENHANCED POWER BEINGS --ARE THE TRUE *HUMANS*.
AND THE *SUBS*-- HERE IN DOWNTOWN--
--MERELY OUR BRUTISH, *SUB-HUMAN* FORBEARS.
WHO'S THE COMPANY, Ms. KATIE?
KIDS SEEM TO KNOW 'EM.
MY FRIENDS--ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE THE *NEW MUTANT BRATPACK*...
...NAMED FOR MY TRUEST FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS OF YOUTH, WHO FOUGHT MOST AND HARDEST OF ALL TO DEFEND THE INNOCENT, THE HELPLESS, THE CHILDREN.
I'M *ARCHANGEL*.
MIRAGE.
BE STILL MY HEART!
YOU'RE LOTS PRETTIER IN PERSON...
...THAN YOUR STATUE MAKES YOU OUT TO BE.
YOU CHILDREN HAVE NO CONCEPTION OF THE GREAT WAR'S DEVASTATION. NO ONE EMERGED UNSCATHED, AND TOO MANY, WITH THEIR HEARTS BRIMFUL OF MISTRUST AND HATE.
OUT OF THAT NIGHTMARE CAME *DOWNTOWN*. NON-SUPER BEINGS WERE STILL NEEDED-- FOR THE MOST MENIAL AND DEGRADING OF TASKS --BUT THEY WERE COMPLETELY EXCLUDED FROM ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE UPTOWN.
AS UPTOWN GREW HIGHER, THE GULF BETWEEN SOCIETIES BECAME AN ABYSS.
THESE YOUNG RUFFIANS ARE MY ATTEMPT TO BRIDGE THAT GAP. I'M THE "PIED PIPER"-- THE BAD INFLUENCE LURING THEM FROM THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, PROMPTING THEM TO QUESTION THE ESTABLISHED ORDER, TO ASK WHY *ALL* SENTIENT CREATURES CAN'T BE TREATED WITH THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL DECENCY AND HUMANITY.
I LIKE THEM YOUNG, WHEN THEY'RE FEELING MOST REBELLIOUS AND THEIR MINDS ARE MOST OPEN AND RECEPTIVE TO NEW IDEAS. AND THROUGH MY BRATPACK, I HOPE TO FULFILL YOUR PROFESSOR XAVIER'S DREAM OF *ONE HUMAN RACE*--
--WITH POWERS AND WITHOUT-- LIVING TOGETHER IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

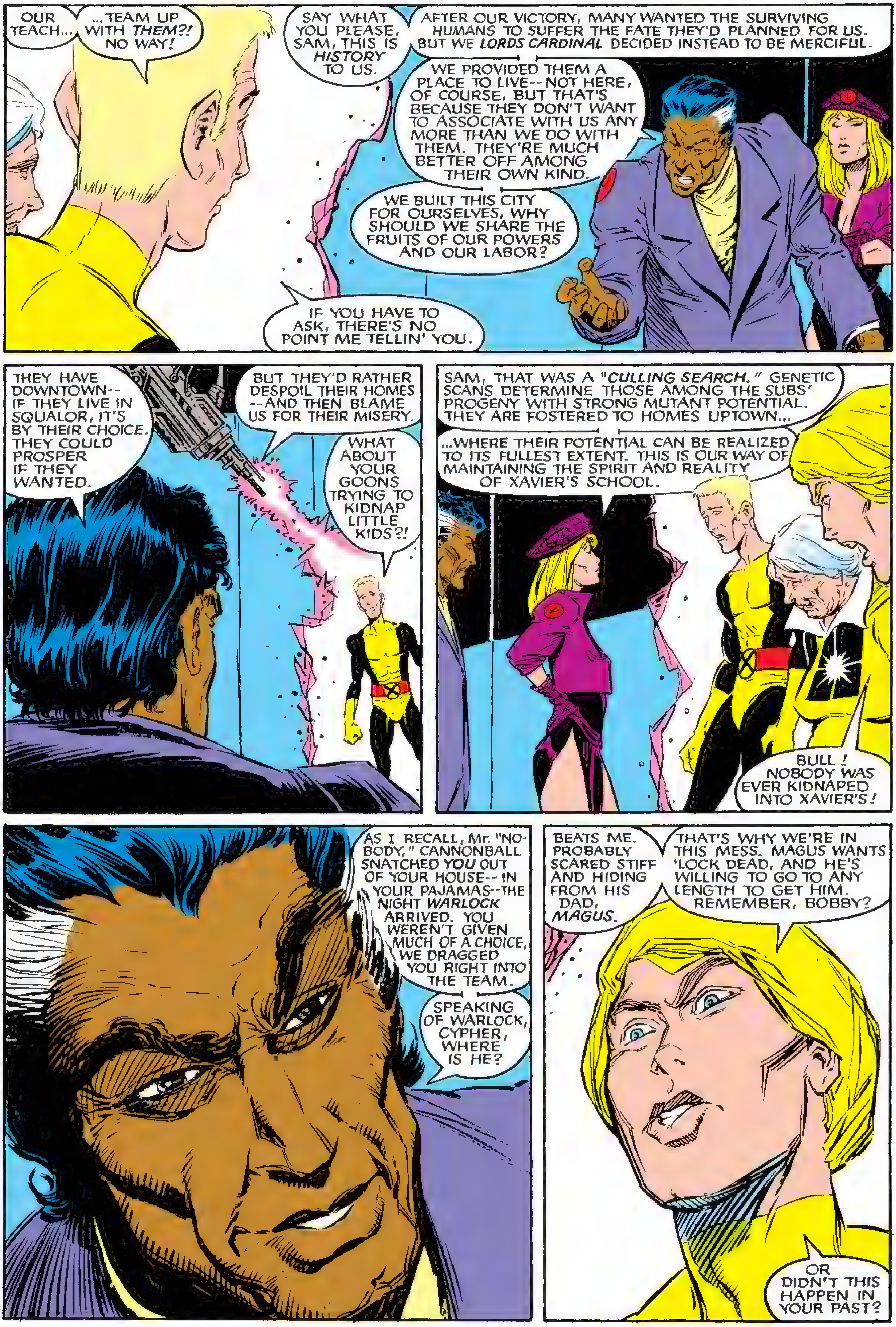

SUDDENLY...
THE FOOD TRUCK--!
EXPLOSION!
GAS MAIN?!
THERE ARE NONE IN DOWNTOWN ANYMORE.
CHILDREN-- *SCATTER!*
OBSERVATION: DETONATION THE RESULT OF CONTROLLED VOLCANIC ERUPTION.
STAND WHERE YOU ARE, CITIZENS, IN THE NAME OF THE *LORDS CARDINAL!*
ARBS!
GET OUT OF HERE, THE LOT OF YOU!
I'LL HOLD OFF THE ARBS!
GUYS, *LOOK!*
KATIE'S DISINTEGRATING THAT ROCK...
"...TO RECHARGE HERSELF, SO SHE CAN FIRE HER *ENERGIZER* POWER BLASTS!
"D'YOU FIGURE THAT MEANS...
KPOW!
ZARK!
ZUMP!
"...SHE POSSESSES *ALL* THE POWER PACK ABILITIES?!"
HER FIRST PASS TAKES AN IMPRESSIVE TOLL, KNOCKING MOST OF THE SQUAD HEAD OVER HEELS.
BUT, AS SHE SWINGS AROUND FOR ANOTHER ATTACK...
ZAM!

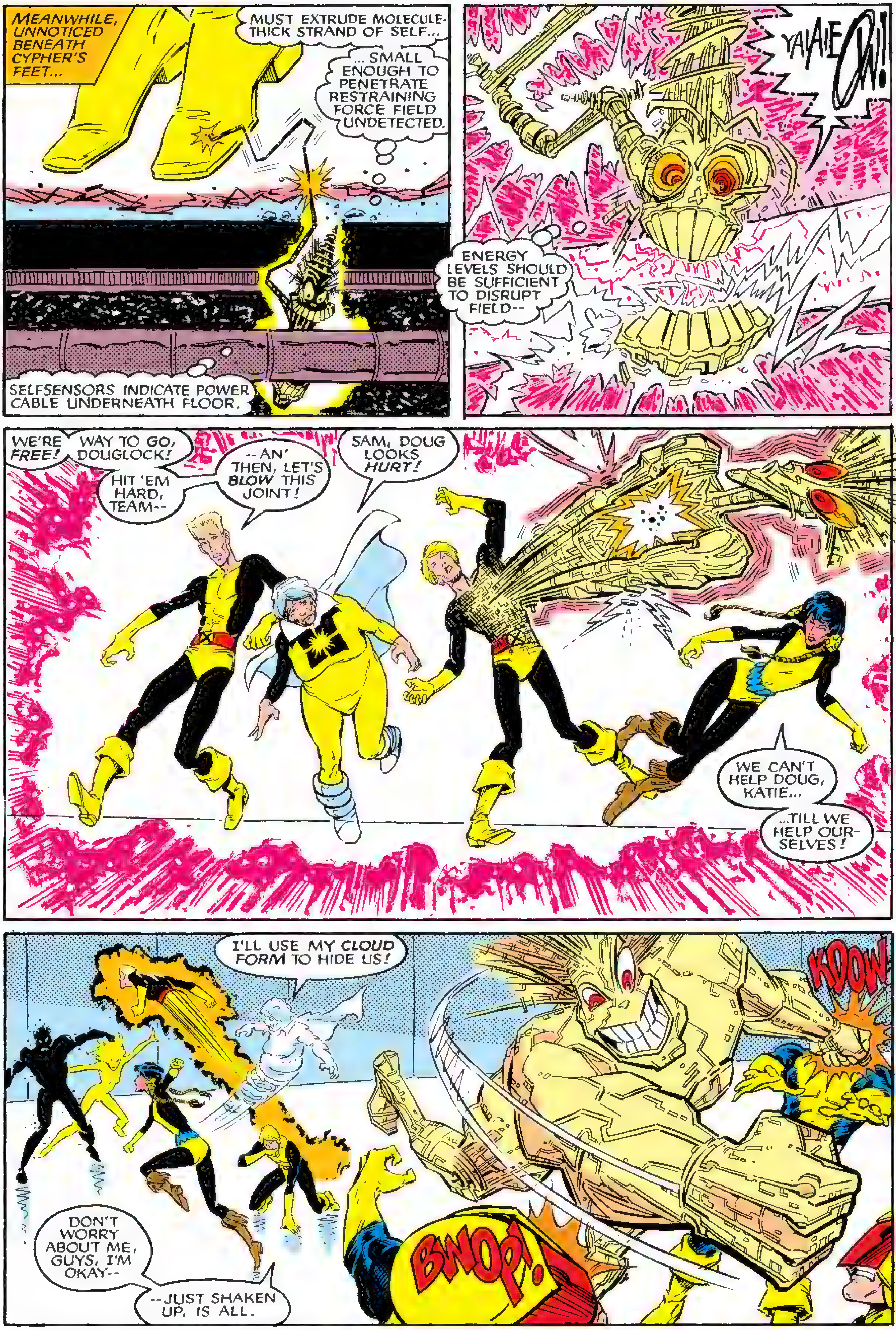

OKAY, CHUMPS, HOW 'BOUT PICKIN' ON SOMEBODY A LITTLE MORE YOUR SPEED!
WAIT! GUYS, THESE COPS ARE MUTANTS, TOO-- THEY ALL HAVE SUPER-POWERS-- WE CAN'T GO PLOWING INTO THEM HALF-COCKED--!
WHY NOT, CHIEF?!
WE'RE HITTING THESE CREEPOID LAMOES PRETTY HAIYIE ARHRR!
VWOOMP!
ANOTHER VOLCANIC BLAST--!
ME AND MY BIG MOUTH. I'VE GOT A NASTY FEELING DANI'S RIGHT-- AND WE'RE IN *BIG* TROUBLE!
'LOCK-- QUICK-- WHILE WE'RE MASKED BY THE FLAMES... ...*MERGE* YOUR BODY WITH MINE!
BUT--!
I KNOW THE RISK!
SO DON'T ARGUE -- TRUST ME-- AND *DO IT!*
HANG ON, CHIEF! AH'LL PULL YOU OUMNPGH!
NO, OLD FRIEND, YOU *WON'T!*
YOUR POWER MAKES YOU INVULNERABLE WHILE BLASTING, CANNONBALL, BUT MY WEIGHT CAN FORCE YOU INTO THE GROUND.
NOTHING LIKE AN UNEXPECTED, VIOLENT CRASH TO BREAK A BODY'S CONCENTRATION. YOU STOP BLASTING, YOU BECOME VULNERABLE.
TWO LIVES FOR YOUR SURRENDER, YOUNGSTERS. YOU RUN, THEY DIE. YOUR CHOICE.
YOU HEARD THE MAN, CYPHER.
FIGHT'S OVER.

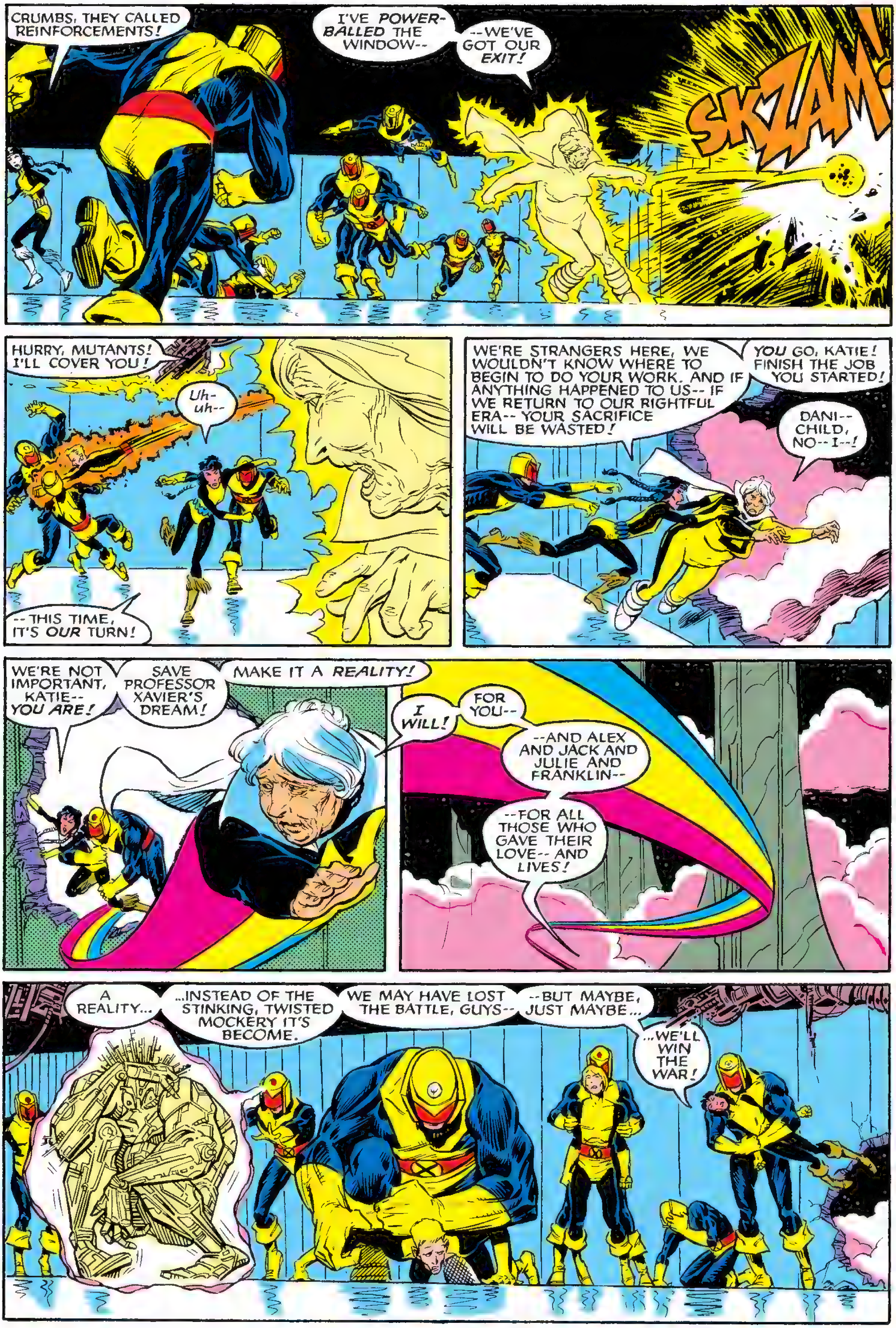

IT IS SPRING.
THE FIELDS ARE FULL OF WILDFLOWERS--HE'S NEVER SEEN SO MANY COLORS--AND THE AIR IS HEADY WITH THEIR SCENT. A HAWK CIRCLES LAZILY OVERHEAD, AND HE CAN HEAR A LARK SINGING CLOSE BY. HE WANTS TO LIE IN THAT FIELD AND LISTEN TO THE BUZZY BEES GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND WATCH THE CLOUDS FLOW MAJESTICALLY BY, THEIR BEAUTY INSPIRING HIS IMAGINATION TO CAST HIM HIGHER THAN ANY BIRD, TO THE FURTHER REACHES OF SPACE AND TIME.
HE LAUGHS--IN WONDERMENT AND TRUE JOY--A STRANGE AND ALIEN SOUND AMIDST THE STIFLED SOBS AND PRAYERS AROUND HIM--
--AND PAPA'S HANDS TIGHTEN GENTLY ON HIS SHOULDERS.
"BE BRAVE," PAPA SAYS, "SHOW THEM YOU ARE NOT AFRAID."
BUT, SUDDENLY, HE IS.
AND THE GUNS CHATTER--SILENCING THE LARK, SENDING THE HAWK INTO STARTLED FLIGHT, ROUGH CORDITE SOURING THE FLOWERS' FRAGRANCE.
BULLETS FLY.
HE HEARS SCREAMS.
DEATH RUSHES TOWARDS HIM. HIS MIND BURNS, POWER HE NEVER DREAMED EXISTED COMING ALIVE, REACHING OUT--BULLETS, FOR HIM, SEEMING TO MOVE IN SLOW MOTION--
THE SIMPLEST OF MATTERS TO USE THIS STRANGE, NEW ABILITY TO MOVE THEM ASIDE, MAKE THEM MISS--
--PAPA GRUNTS, MAMA CRIES HIS NAME, SISTER MAKES NO NOISE AT ALL--
--HE IS FALLING WITH THEM...
...INTO BLESSED, ETERNAL OBLIVION
SHOT, LIKE THEM.
KILLED, LIKE THEM.

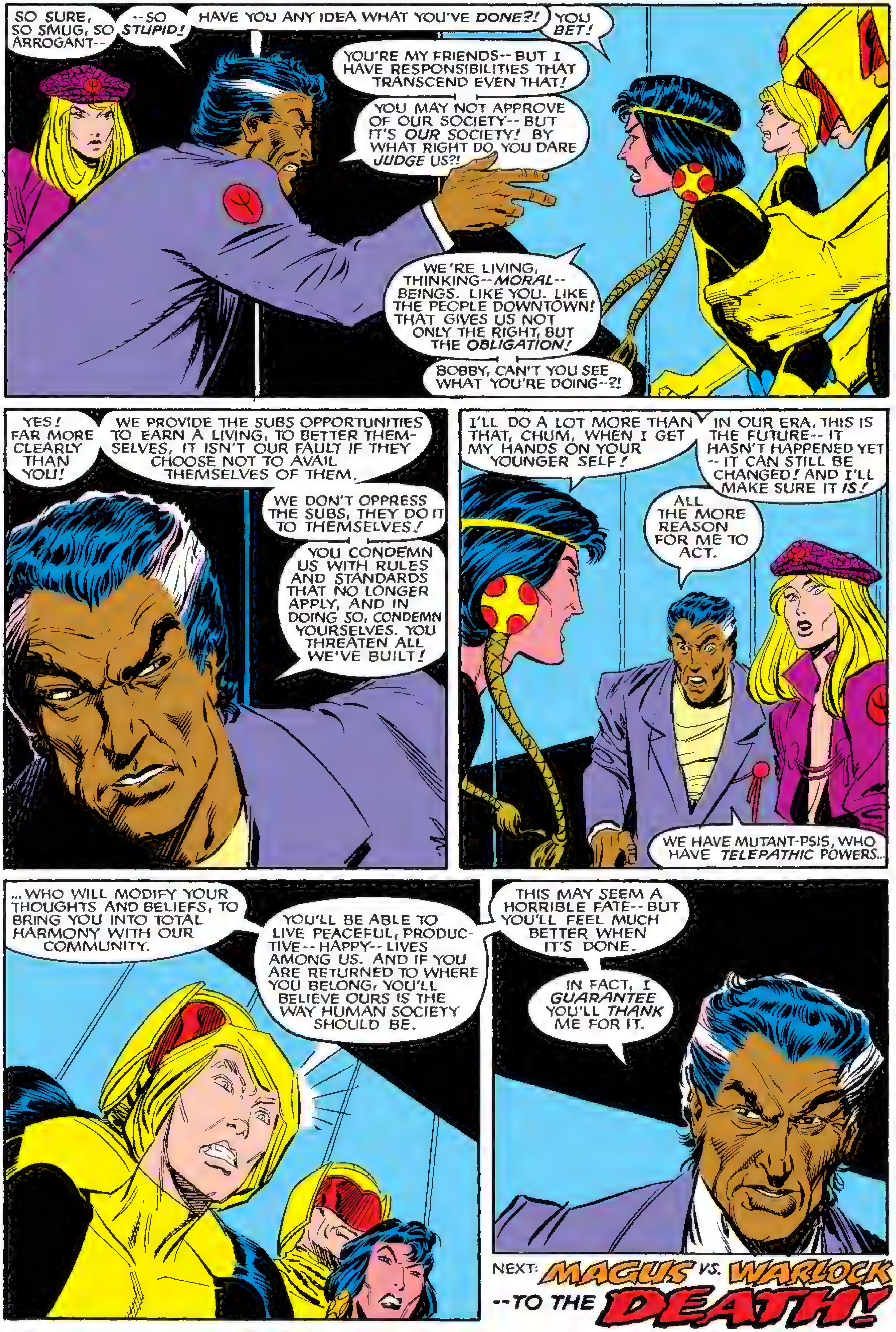

HE WAKES TO DARKNESS, DIRT IN EYES, NOSE, MOUTH, PRESSING IN, HOLDING FAST. STILL LOOSELY PACKED, AIR TO BREATHE IN GASPS, LIKE AN ANIMAL, WHICH WAY IS UP, ALIVE, SCRABBLE, SCRATCH, DIG, CLAW, ALIVE, BODIES EVERYWHERE, HOLDING HIM DOWN-- DON'T LEAVE US, HE HEARS THEM SILENTLY CALL, STAY, PLEASE, THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG--
--BLOOD SOAKS THE EARTH, QUICKLIME BURNS HIS SKIN, ALIVE, ALIVE, I AM ALIVE!
THE BOY, THEN.
THE MAN, NOW.
HIS NAME IS MAGNETO.
SO LONG AGO, SO FAR AWAY.
YET THE MEMORIES ARE STILL VIVID. EVERY DETAIL, ETCHED WITH ACID.
MY POWER--MY MASTERY OVER MAGNETISM--FIRST MANIFESTED ITSELF THAT MORNING. IT SAVED ME, WHY COULDN'T IT DO THE SAME FOR THOSE I LOVED?!
THE GERMANS WERE SO ASTONISHED BY MY SURVIVAL, THEY DECIDED TO SPARE MY LIFE. I WAS SENT INSTEAD TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP. AUSCHWITZ.
SOMETIMES, I WISH I HADN'T STRUGGLED SO HARD.
XAVIER'S SCHOOL IS SO EMPTY WITH THE NEW MUTANTS GONE.
AM I A FOOL FOR BELIEVING THEY'RE NOT DEAD...
...AND THAT THEY'LL SOMEDAY RETURN?
PROBABLY.
IS MY DREAM A HARBINGER OF MUTANTKIND'S EVENTUAL FATE? POSSIBLY. BUT WILL WE BE THE VICTIMS, OR THE EXECUTIONERS?
I SENSE I HAVE REACHED A CROSSROADS.
THE HELLFIRE CLUB HAS INVITED ME TO JOIN THE LORDS CARDINAL AS THEIR WHITE KING. THE IDEA IS PREPOSTEROUS-- THEY ARE VILLAINS, AMONG THIS SCHOOL'S DEADLIEST FOES.
BUT THEN, SO ONCE WAS I.
IF WE STAND ALONE, WE COULD BE DESTROYED.
IF I ACCEPT THIS ALLIANCE...
...WE COULD BE DESTROYED!
SKRACH!
THE CHOICE IS MINE-- THE RESPONSIBILITY IS MINE--
--BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!


THAT WAS THEN, WHERE THE NEW MUTANTS BELONG.
THIS IS NOW, WHERE THEY'RE STUCK.
HEADS UP, GANG.
UNLESS I'M MUCH MISTAKEN, WE'RE ABOUT TO MEET...
... THE HEAD HONCHOS OF THIS RATHOLE.
WATCH YOUR TONGUE, GIRL-- YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE *CHIEF ARBITRATORS!*
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CAPTAIN. DANIELLE'S CALLED ME FAR WORSE THINGS IN HER DAY--
--OCCASIONALLY WITH GOOD REASON.
OR HAVE I CHANGED SO MUCH, THAT YOU'VE ALL FORGOTTEN...
BOBBY?!?
THAT BLOND WOMAN-- IT CAN'T BE--
--AMARA!?!
NO! *NO!*
IF YOU'RE IN CHARGE HERE, YOU *HAVE* CHANGED-- BECAUSE THE *SUNSPOT* AND *MAGMA* WE KNEW WOULD *NEVER* BE A PART OF SUCH A CRUEL AND REPRESSIVE SOCIETY!
EASY TO CONDEMN, DANI...
...WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
THERE WAS A *WAR*, MY FRIENDS-- THE BLOODIEST AND MOST TERRIBLE IN HUMAN HISTORY.
IF MAGNETO HADN'T FORGED AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN XAVIER'S SCHOOL AND THE HELLFIRE CLUB ..
...MUTANTKIND WOULD HAVE BEEN *EXTERMINATED!*


OUR TEACH...
...TEAM UP WITH *THEM?!* NO WAY!
SAY WHAT YOU PLEASE, SAM, THIS IS *HISTORY* TO US.
AFTER OUR VICTORY, MANY WANTED THE SURVIVING HUMANS TO SUFFER THE FATE THEY'D PLANNED FOR US. BUT WE *LORDS CARDINAL* DECIDED INSTEAD TO BE MERCIFUL.
WE PROVIDED THEM A PLACE TO LIVE--NOT HERE, OF COURSE, BUT THAT'S BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO ASSOCIATE WITH US ANY MORE THAN WE DO WITH THEM. THEY'RE MUCH BETTER OFF AMONG THEIR OWN KIND.
WE BUILT THIS CITY FOR OURSELVES, WHY SHOULD WE SHARE THE FRUITS OF OUR POWERS AND OUR LABOR?
IF YOU HAVE TO ASK, THERE'S NO POINT ME TELLIN' YOU.
THEY HAVE DOWNTOWN-- IF THEY LIVE IN SQUALOR, IT'S BY THEIR CHOICE. THEY COULD PROSPER IF THEY WANTED.
BUT THEY'D RATHER DESPOIL THEIR HOMES --AND THEN BLAME US FOR THEIR MISERY.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR GOONS TRYING TO KIDNAP LITTLE KIDS?!
SAM, THAT WAS A "*CULLING SEARCH.*" GENETIC SCANS DETERMINE THOSE AMONG THE SUBS' PROGENY WITH STRONG MUTANT POTENTIAL. THEY ARE FOSTERED TO HOMES UPTOWN...
...WHERE THEIR POTENTIAL CAN BE REALIZED TO ITS FULLEST EXTENT. THIS IS OUR WAY OF MAINTAINING THE SPIRIT AND REALITY OF XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
BULL! NOBODY WAS EVER KIDNAPED INTO XAVIER'S!
AS I RECALL, Mr. "NOBODY," CANNONBALL SNATCHED *YOU* OUT OF YOUR HOUSE--IN YOUR PAJAMAS--THE NIGHT *WARLOCK* ARRIVED. YOU WEREN'T GIVEN MUCH OF A CHOICE, WE DRAGGED YOU RIGHT INTO THE TEAM.
SPEAKING OF WARLOCK, CYPHER, WHERE IS HE?
BEATS ME. PROBABLY SCARED STIFF AND HIDING FROM HIS DAD, *MAGUS*.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE IN THIS MESS. MAGUS WANTS 'LOCK DEAD, AND HE'S WILLING TO GO TO ANY LENGTH TO GET HIM. REMEMBER, BOBBY?
OR DIDN'T THIS HAPPEN IN YOUR PAST?


MEANWHILE, UNNOTICED BENEATH CYPHER'S FEET...
MUST EXTRUDE MOLECULE-THICK STRAND OF SELF...
...SMALL ENOUGH TO PENETRATE RESTRAINING FORCE FIELD UNDETECTED.
SELFSENSORS INDICATE POWER CABLE UNDERNEATH FLOOR.
YAIAIEOW!
ENERGY LEVELS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO DISRUPT FIELD--
WE'RE FREE!
WAY TO GO, DOUGLOCK!
HIT 'EM HARD, TEAM--
--AN' THEN, LET'S BLOW THIS JOINT!
SAM, DOUG LOOKS HURT!
WE CAN'T HELP DOUG, KATIE...
...TILL WE HELP OURSELVES!
I'LL USE MY CLOUD FORM TO HIDE US!
KDOW
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, GUYS, I'M OKAY--
--JUST SHAKEN UP, IS ALL.
BNOP!


CRUMBS, THEY CALLED REINFORCEMENTS!
I'VE *POWER-BALLED* THE WINDOW--
--WE'VE GOT OUR *EXIT!*
SKZAM!
HURRY, MUTANTS! I'LL COVER YOU!
Uh-uh--
--THIS TIME, IT'S *OUR* TURN!
WE'RE STRANGERS HERE. WE WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN TO DO YOUR WORK. AND IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO US-- IF WE RETURN TO OUR RIGHTFUL ERA-- YOUR SACRIFICE WILL BE WASTED!
YOU GO, KATIE! FINISH THE JOB YOU STARTED!
DANI-- CHILD, NO-- I--!
WE'RE NOT IMPORTANT, KATIE-- *YOU ARE!*
SAVE PROFESSOR XAVIER'S DREAM!
MAKE IT A *REALITY!*
I WILL!
FOR YOU--
--AND ALEX AND JACK AND JULIE AND FRANKLIN--
--FOR ALL THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LOVE-- AND *LIVES!*
A REALITY...
...INSTEAD OF THE STINKING, TWISTED MOCKERY IT'S BECOME.
WE MAY HAVE LOST THE BATTLE, GUYS--
--BUT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE...
...WE'LL WIN THE WAR!


SO SURE, SO SMUG, SO ARROGANT--
--SO *STUPID!*
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE *DONE?!*
YOU *BET!*
YOU'RE MY FRIENDS-- BUT I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT TRANSCEND EVEN THAT!
YOU MAY NOT APPROVE OF OUR SOCIETY-- BUT IT'S *OUR* SOCIETY! BY WHAT RIGHT DO YOU DARE *JUDGE* US?!
WE'RE LIVING, THINKING--*MORAL*--BEINGS. LIKE YOU. LIKE THE PEOPLE DOWNTOWN! THAT GIVES US NOT ONLY THE RIGHT, BUT THE *OBLIGATION!*
BOBBY, CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING--?!
YES! FAR MORE CLEARLY THAN YOU!
WE PROVIDE THE SUBS OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN A LIVING, TO BETTER THEMSELVES. IT ISN'T OUR FAULT IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THEM.
WE DON'T OPPRESS THE SUBS, THEY DO IT TO THEMSELVES!
YOU CONDEMN US WITH RULES AND STANDARDS THAT NO LONGER APPLY, AND IN DOING SO, CONDEMN YOURSELVES. YOU THREATEN ALL WE'VE BUILT!
I'LL DO A LOT MORE THAN THAT, CHUM, WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON YOUR YOUNGER SELF!
IN OUR ERA, THIS IS THE FUTURE-- IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET -- IT CAN STILL BE CHANGED! AND I'LL MAKE SURE IT *IS!*
ALL THE MORE REASON FOR ME TO ACT.
WE HAVE MUTANT-PSIS, WHO HAVE *TELEPATHIC* POWERS...
...WHO WILL MODIFY YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS, TO BRING YOU INTO TOTAL HARMONY WITH OUR COMMUNITY.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE PEACEFUL, PRODUCTIVE-- HAPPY-- LIVES AMONG US. AND IF YOU ARE RETURNED TO WHERE YOU BELONG, YOU'LL BELIEVE OURS IS THE WAY HUMAN SOCIETY SHOULD BE.
THIS MAY SEEM A HORRIBLE FATE-- BUT YOU'LL FEEL MUCH BETTER WHEN IT'S DONE.
IN FACT, I *GUARANTEE* YOU'LL *THANK* ME FOR IT.
NEXT: MAGUS VS. WARLOCK --TO THE DEATH!

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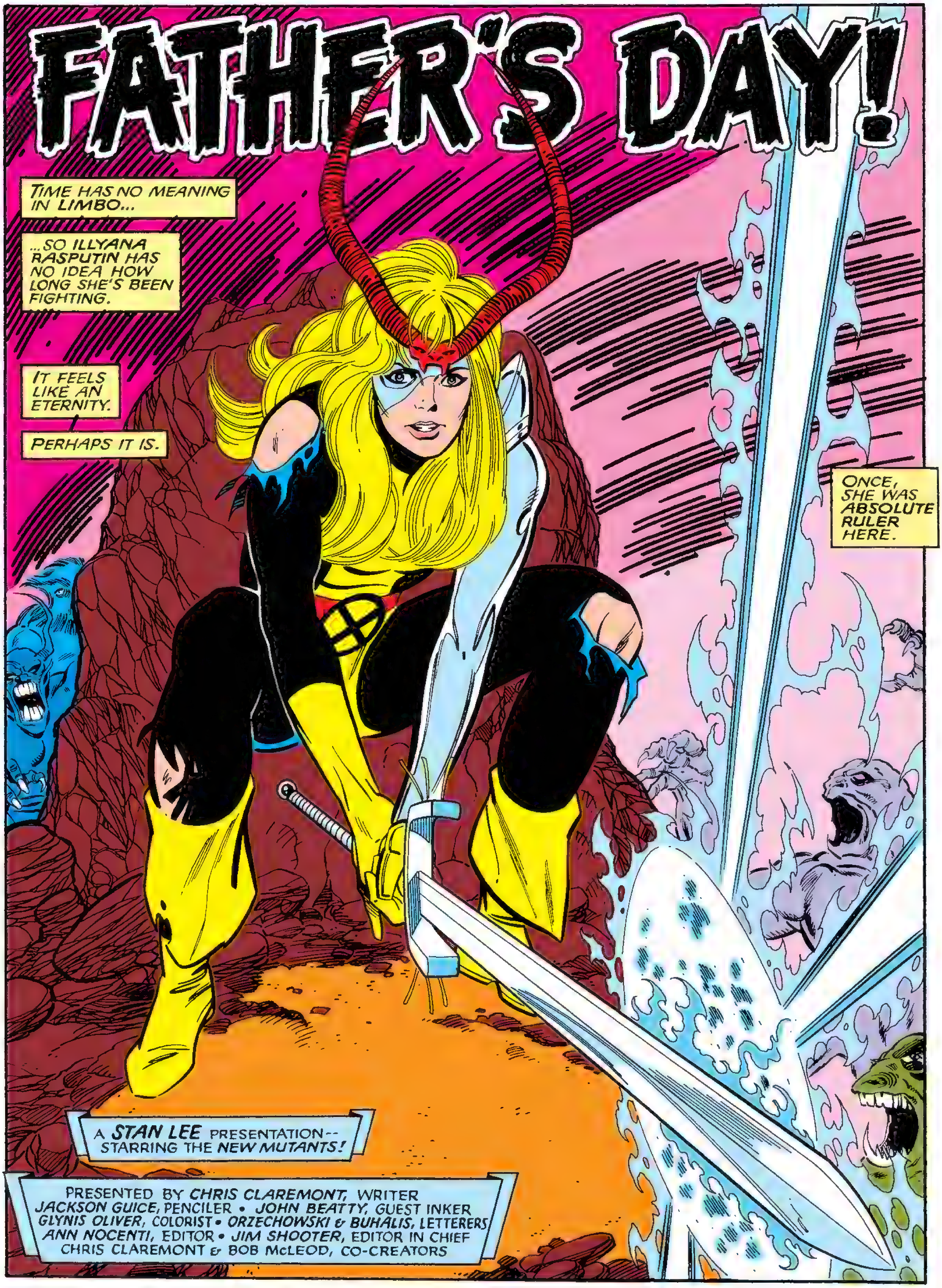
DOUBLE-SIZED ISSUE!
THE NEW MUTANTS®
MAGIK LOSES CONTROL OF LIMBO! THE MUTANTS LOST IN TIME! THE RETURN OF XAVIER! ALL THIS AND THE STARJAMMERS, TOO!


FATHER'S DAY!
TIME HAS NO MEANING IN LIMBO...
...SO ILLYANA RASPUTIN HAS NO IDEA HOW LONG SHE'S BEEN FIGHTING.
IT FEELS LIKE AN ETERNITY.
PERHAPS IT IS.
ONCE, SHE WAS ABSOLUTE RULER HERE.
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION-- STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS!
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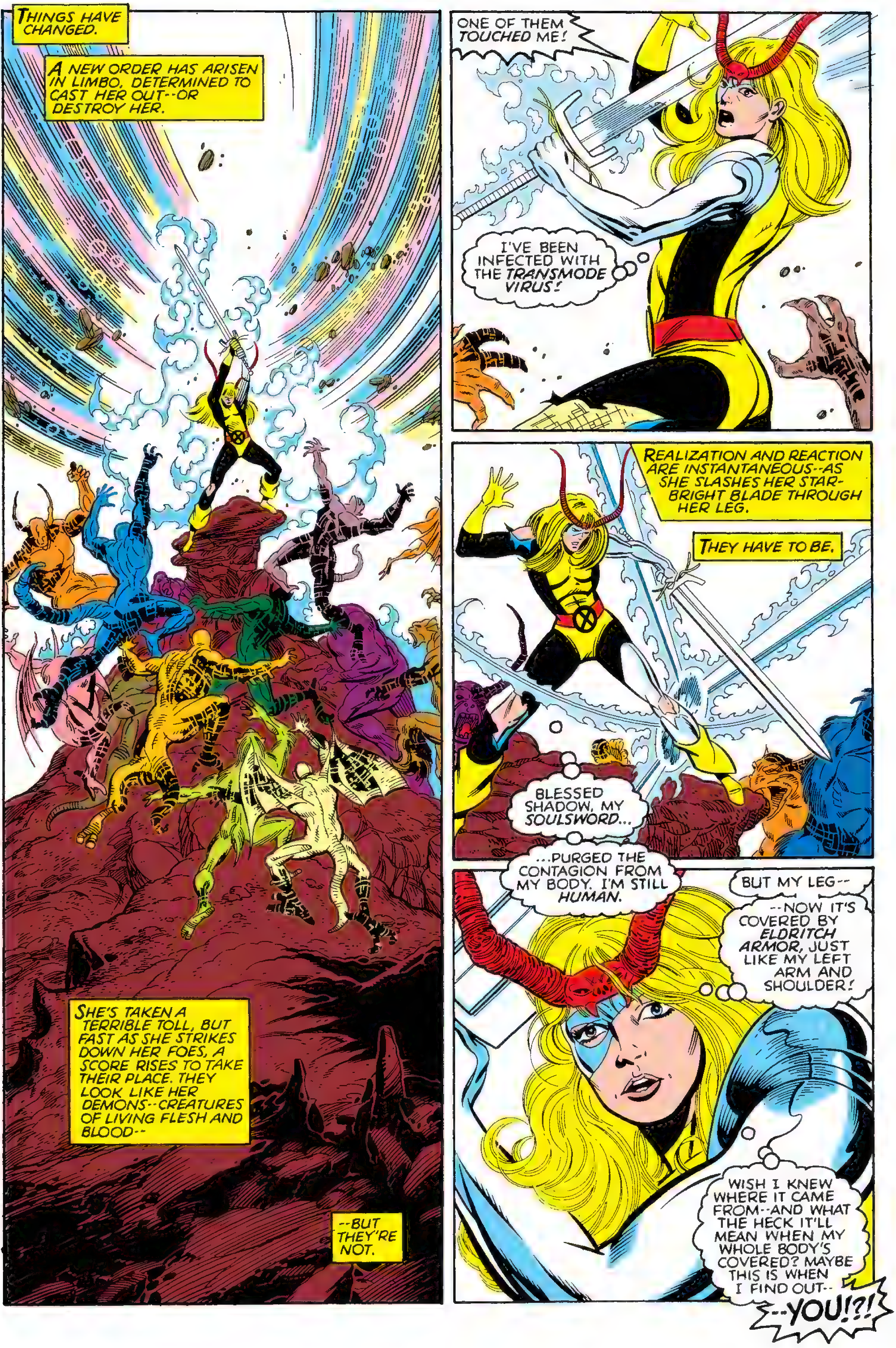
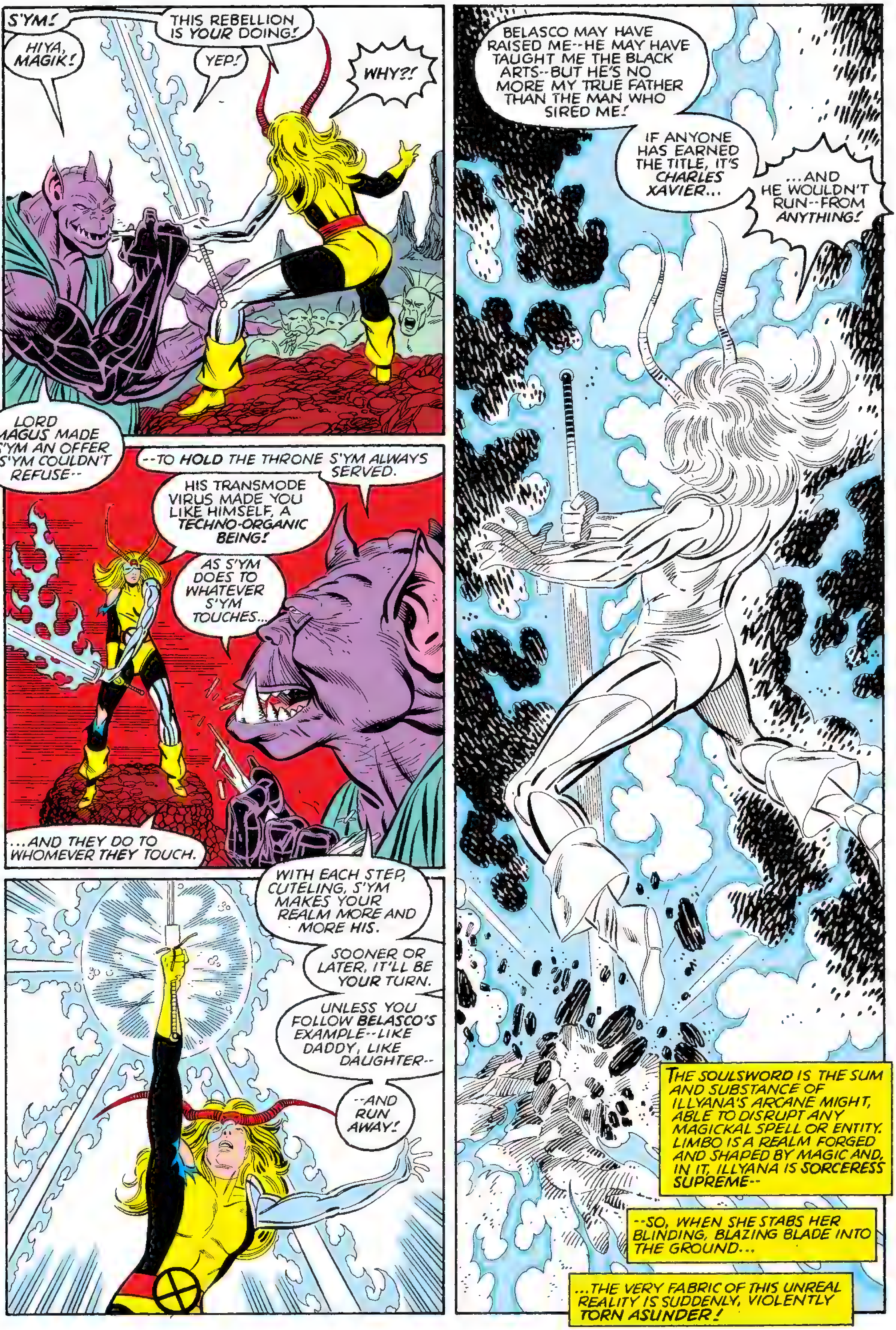
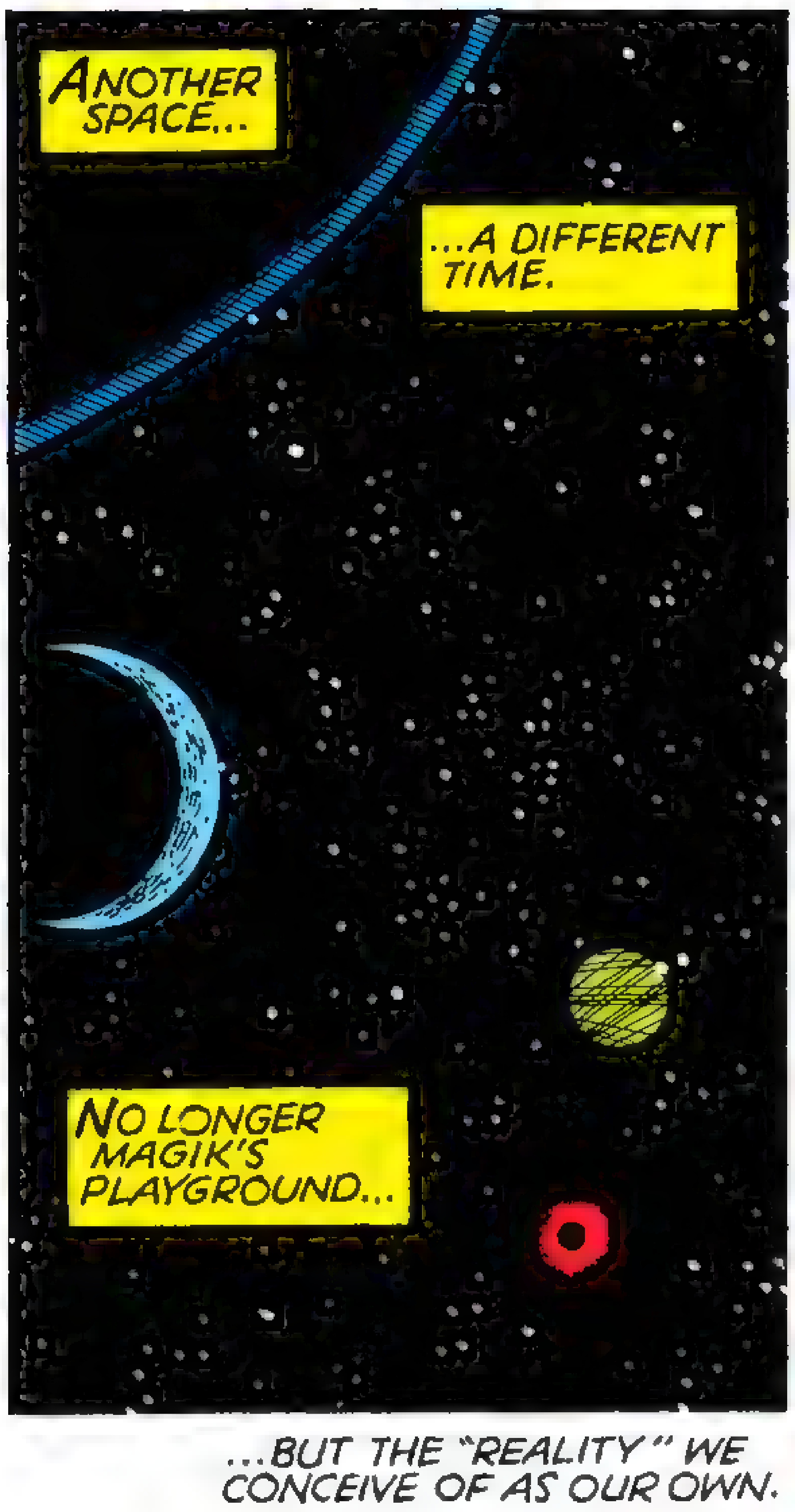
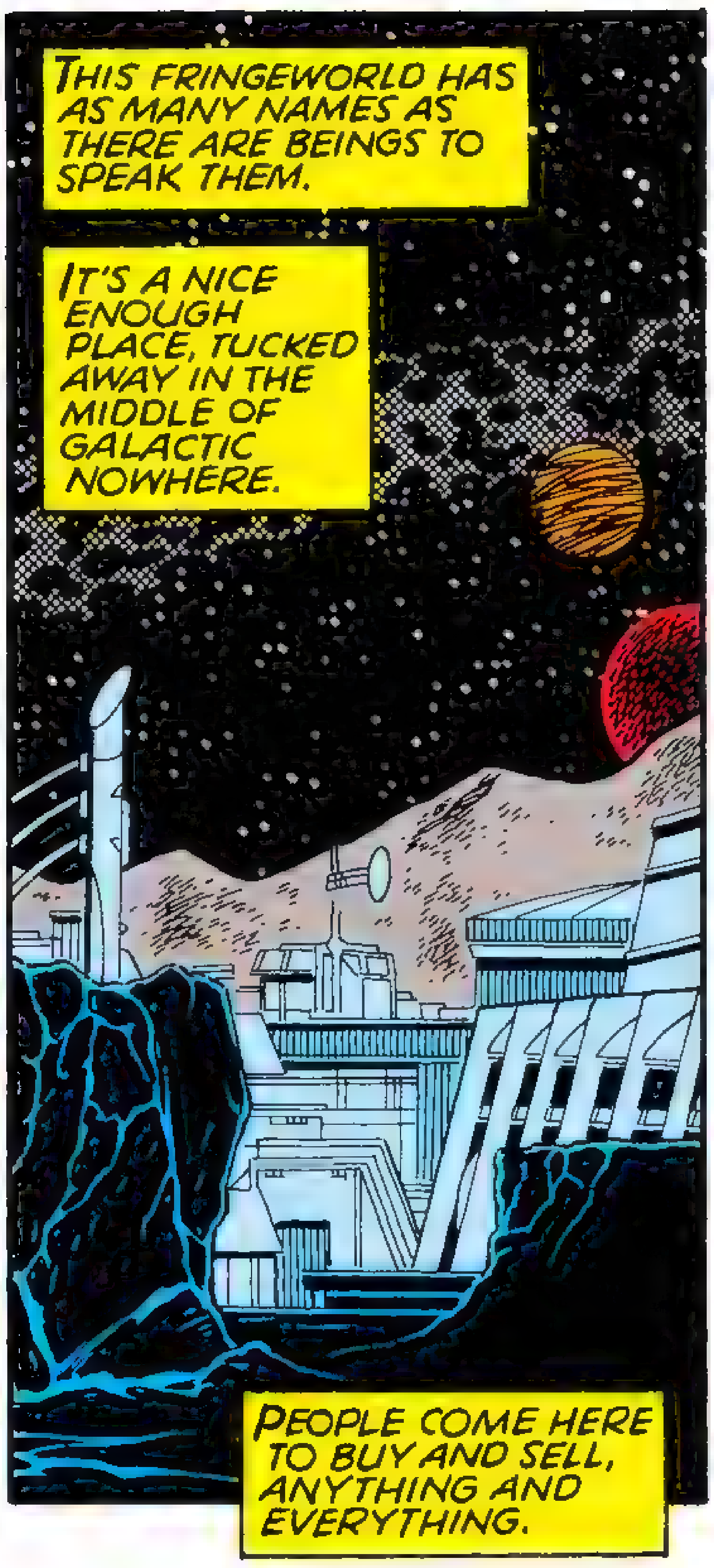
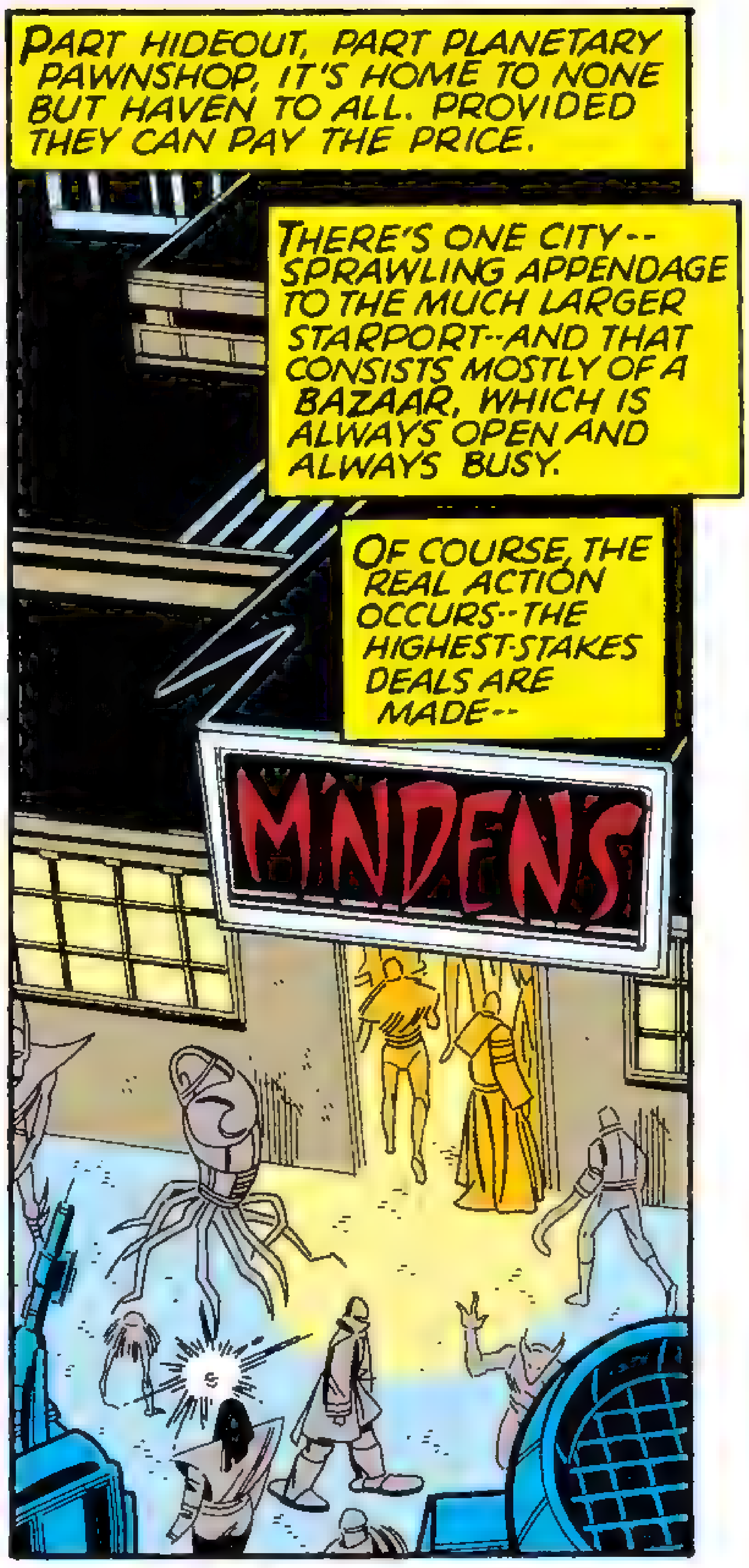
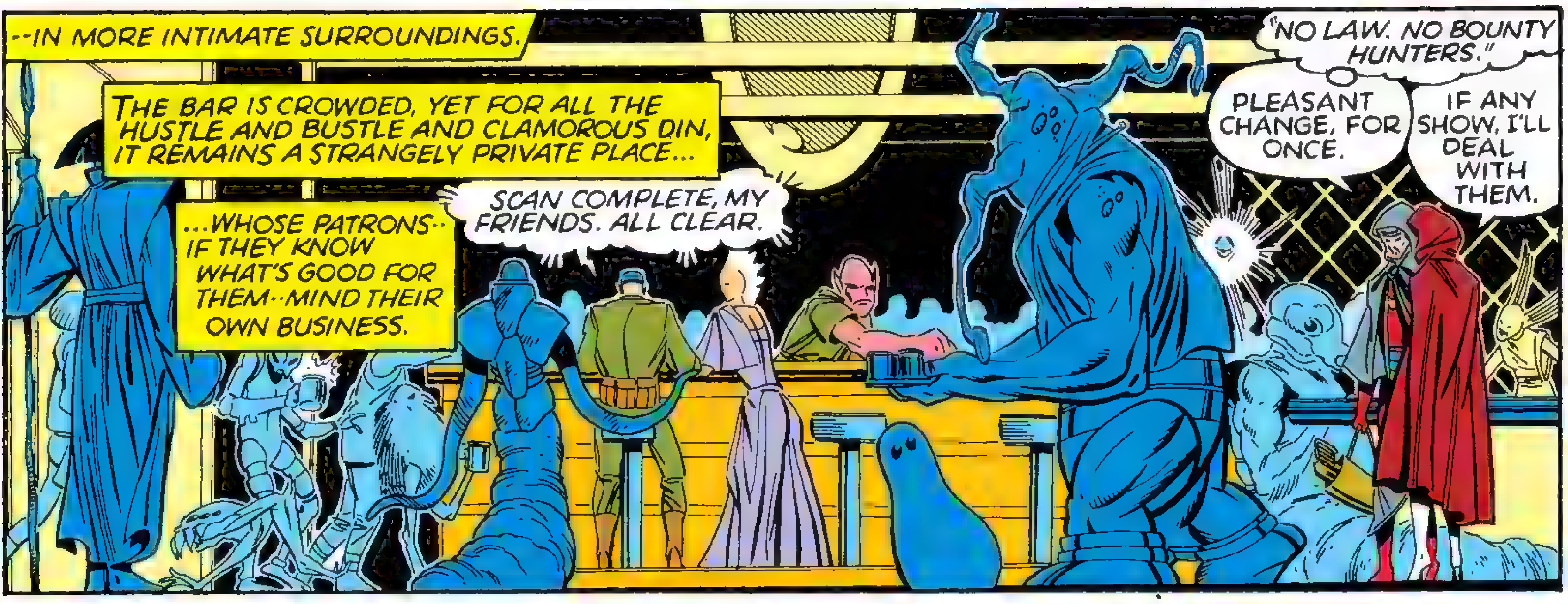

THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
A NEW ORDER HAS ARISEN IN LIMBO, DETERMINED TO CAST HER OUT--OR DESTROY HER.
SHE'S TAKEN A TERRIBLE TOLL, BUT FAST AS SHE STRIKES DOWN HER FOES, A SCORE RISES TO TAKE THEIR PLACE. THEY LOOK LIKE HER DEMONS--CREATURES OF LIVING FLESH AND BLOOD--
--BUT THEY'RE NOT.
ONE OF THEM TOUCHED ME!
I'VE BEEN INFECTED WITH THE TRANSMODE VIRUS!
REALIZATION AND REACTION ARE INSTANTANEOUS--AS SHE SLASHES HER STAR-BRIGHT BLADE THROUGH HER LEG.
THEY HAVE TO BE.
BLESSED SHADOW, MY SOULSWORD...
...PURGED THE CONTAGION FROM MY BODY. I'M STILL HUMAN.
BUT MY LEG--
--NOW IT'S COVERED BY ELDRITCH ARMOR, JUST LIKE MY LEFT ARM AND SHOULDER!
WISH I KNEW WHERE IT CAME FROM--AND WHAT THE HECK IT'LL MEAN WHEN MY WHOLE BODY'S COVERED? MAYBE THIS IS WHEN I FIND OUT--
--YOU!?!

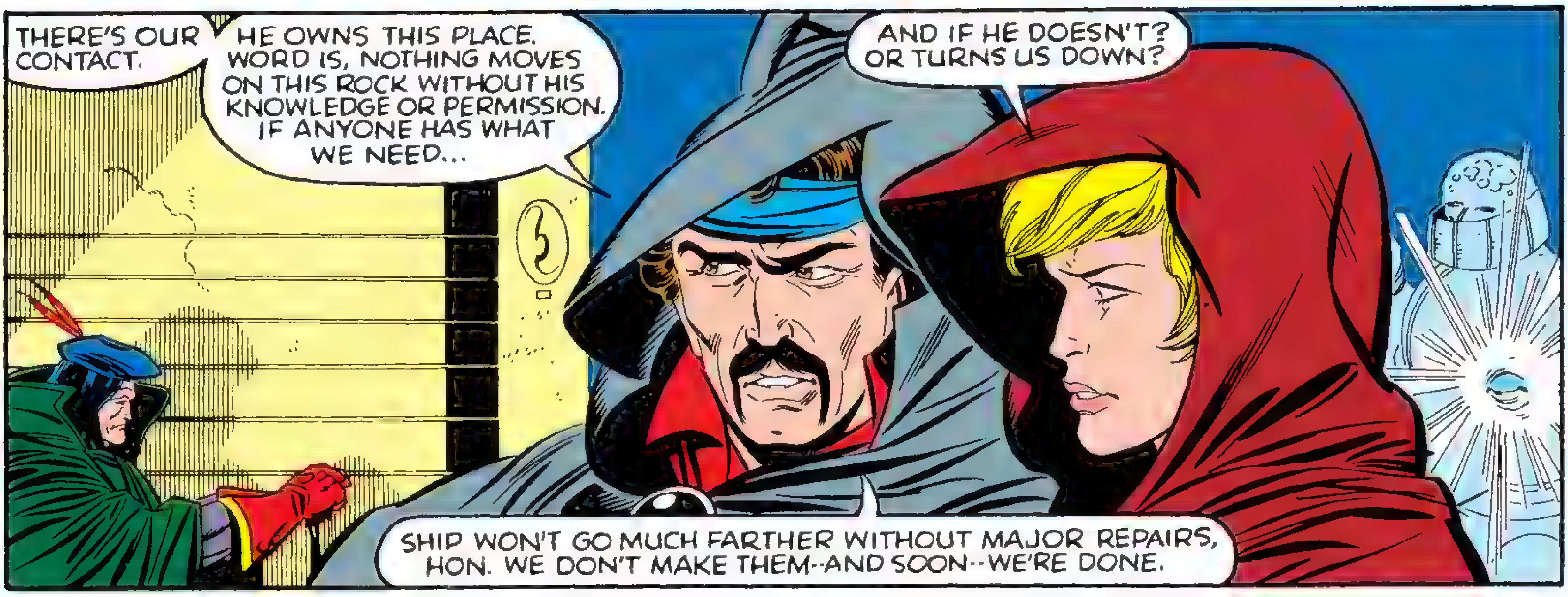

S'YM!
HIYA, MAGIK!
THIS REBELLION IS *YOUR* DOING!
YEP!
WHY?!
LORD MAGUS MADE S'YM AN OFFER S'YM COULDN'T REFUSE--
--TO **HOLD** THE THRONE S'YM ALWAYS SERVED.
HIS TRANSMODE VIRUS MADE YOU LIKE HIMSELF, A ***TECHNO-ORGANIC BEING!***
AS S'YM DOES TO WHATEVER S'YM TOUCHES...
...AND THEY DO TO WHOMEVER THEY TOUCH.
WITH EACH STEP, CUTELING, S'YM MAKES YOUR REALM MORE AND MORE **HIS**.
SOONER OR LATER, IT'LL BE YOUR TURN.
UNLESS YOU FOLLOW **BELASCO'S** EXAMPLE--LIKE DADDY, LIKE DAUGHTER--
--AND RUN AWAY!
BELASCO MAY HAVE RAISED ME--HE MAY HAVE TAUGHT ME THE BLACK ARTS--BUT HE'S NO MORE MY TRUE FATHER THAN THE MAN WHO SIRED ME!
IF ANYONE HAS EARNED THE TITLE, IT'S ***CHARLES XAVIER...***
...AND HE WOULDN'T RUN--FROM *ANYTHING!*
THE **SOULSWORD** IS THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF ILLYANA'S ARCANE MIGHT, ABLE TO DISRUPT ANY MAGICKAL SPELL OR ENTITY. **LIMBO** IS A REALM FORGED AND SHAPED BY MAGIC AND, IN IT, ILLYANA IS **SORCERESS SUPREME**--
--SO, WHEN SHE STABS HER BLINDING, BLAZING BLADE INTO THE GROUND...
...THE VERY FABRIC OF THIS UNREAL REALITY IS SUDDENLY, VIOLENTLY **TORN ASUNDER!**

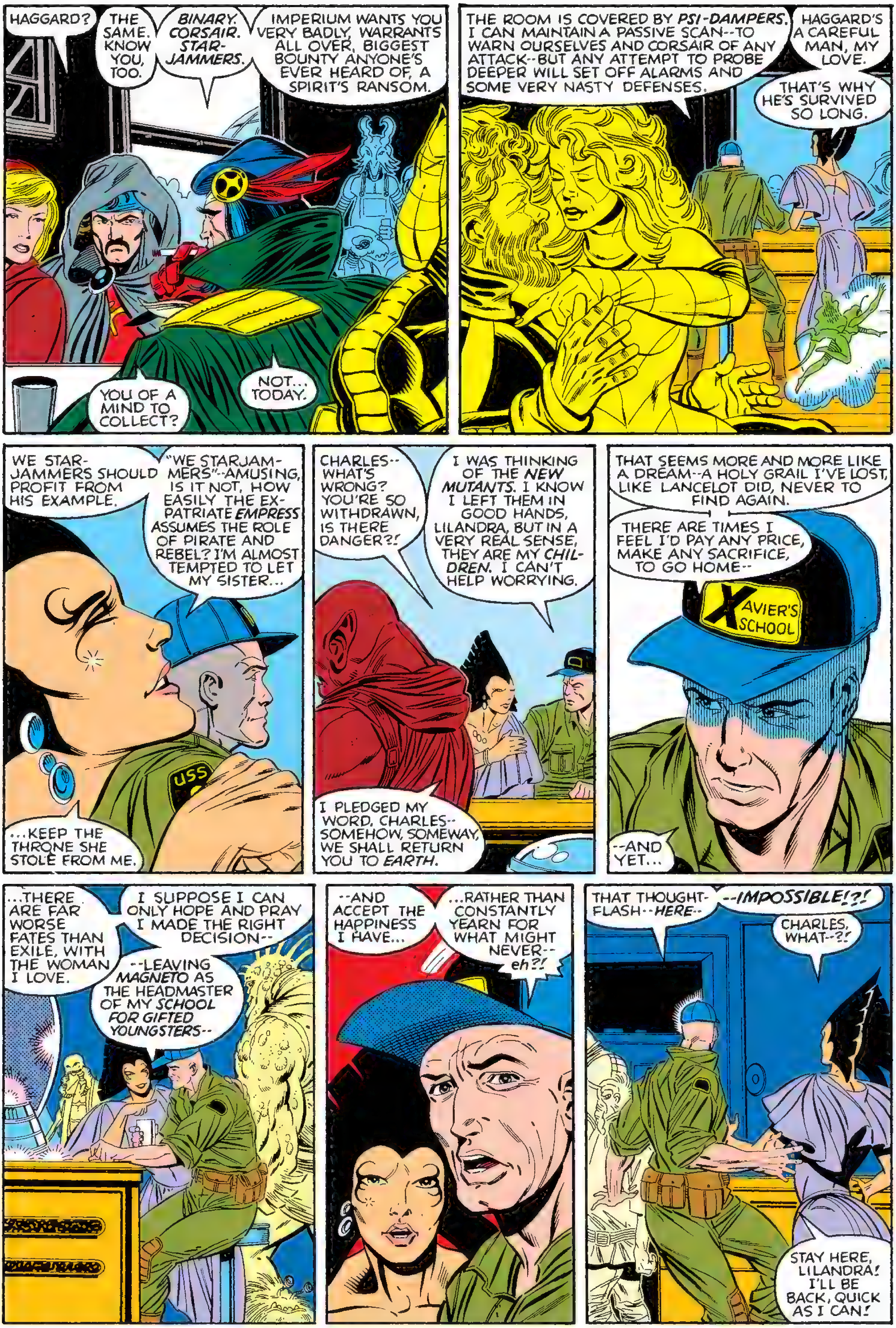

ANOTHER SPACE...
...A DIFFERENT TIME.
NO LONGER MAGIK'S PLAYGROUND...
...BUT THE "REALITY" WE CONCEIVE OF AS OUR OWN.

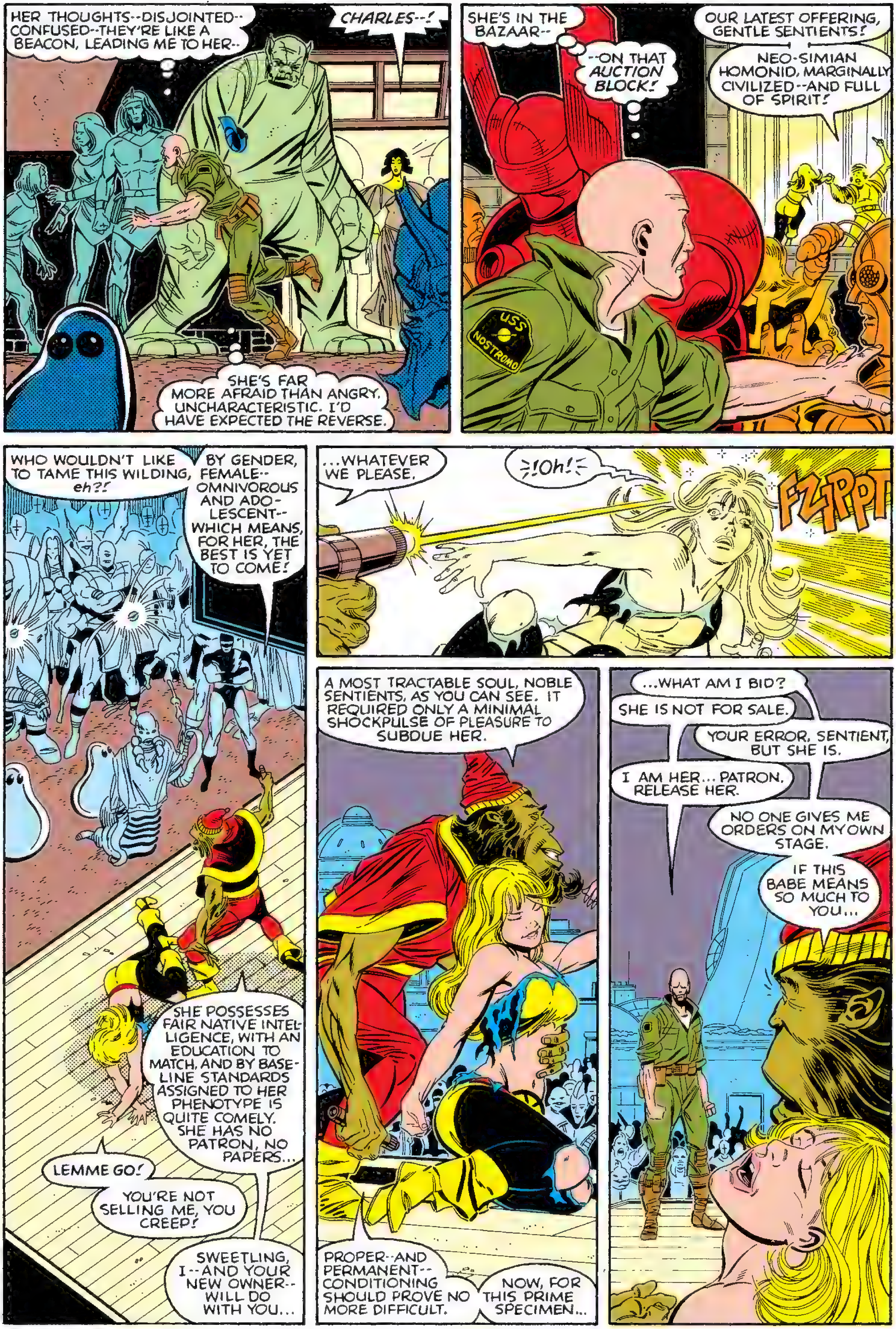

THIS FRINGEWORLD HAS AS MANY NAMES AS THERE ARE BEINGS TO SPEAK THEM.
IT'S A NICE ENOUGH PLACE, TUCKED AWAY IN THE MIDDLE OF GALACTIC NOWHERE.
PEOPLE COME HERE TO BUY AND SELL, ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.

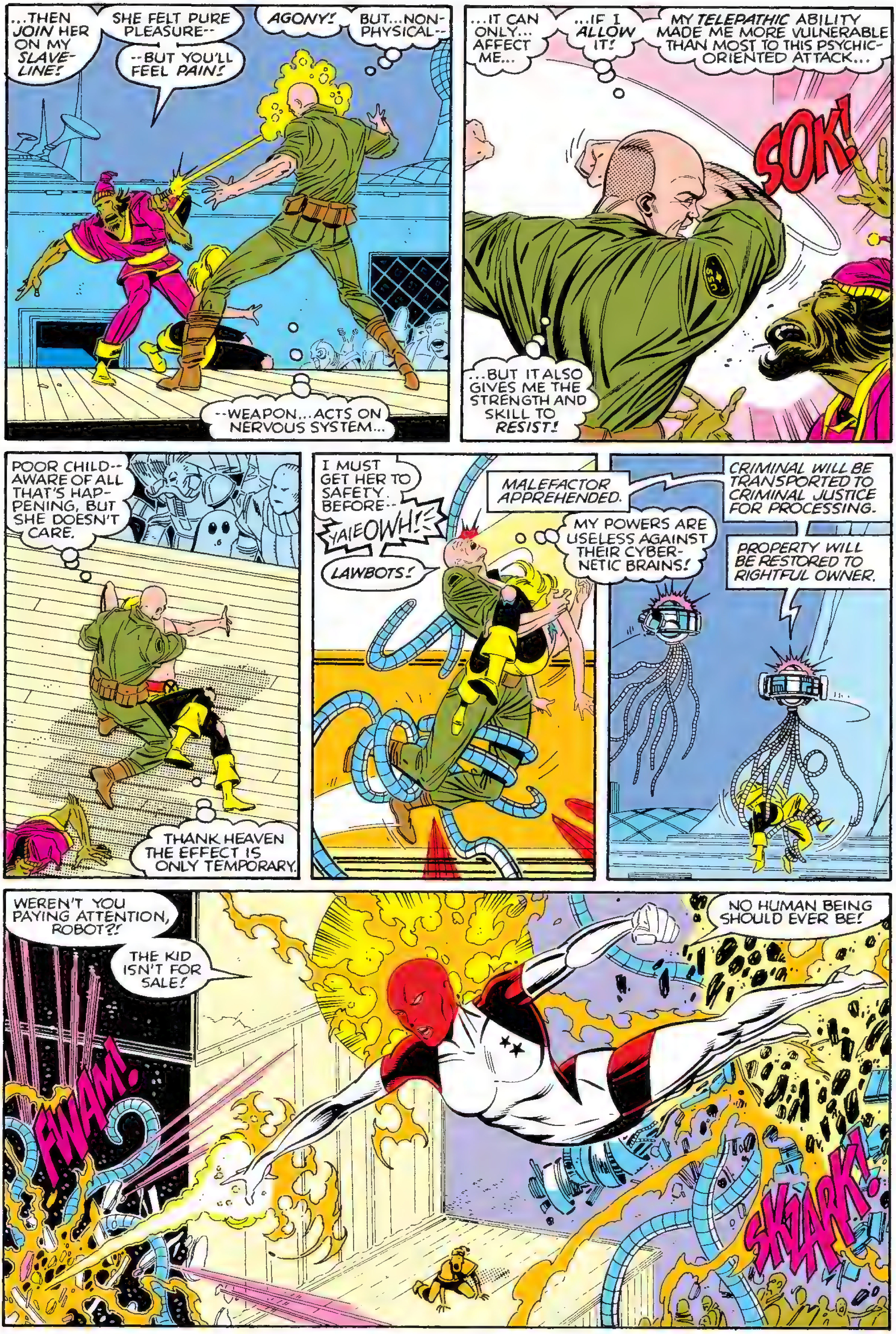

PART HIDEOUT, PART PLANETARY PAWNSHOP, IT'S HOME TO NONE BUT HAVEN TO ALL. PROVIDED THEY CAN PAY THE PRICE.
THERE'S ONE CITY--SPRAWLING APPENDAGE TO THE MUCH LARGER STARPORT--AND THAT CONSISTS MOSTLY OF A BAZAAR, WHICH IS ALWAYS OPEN AND ALWAYS BUSY.
OF COURSE, THE REAL ACTION OCCURS--THE HIGHEST-STAKES DEALS ARE MADE--
MINDEN'S

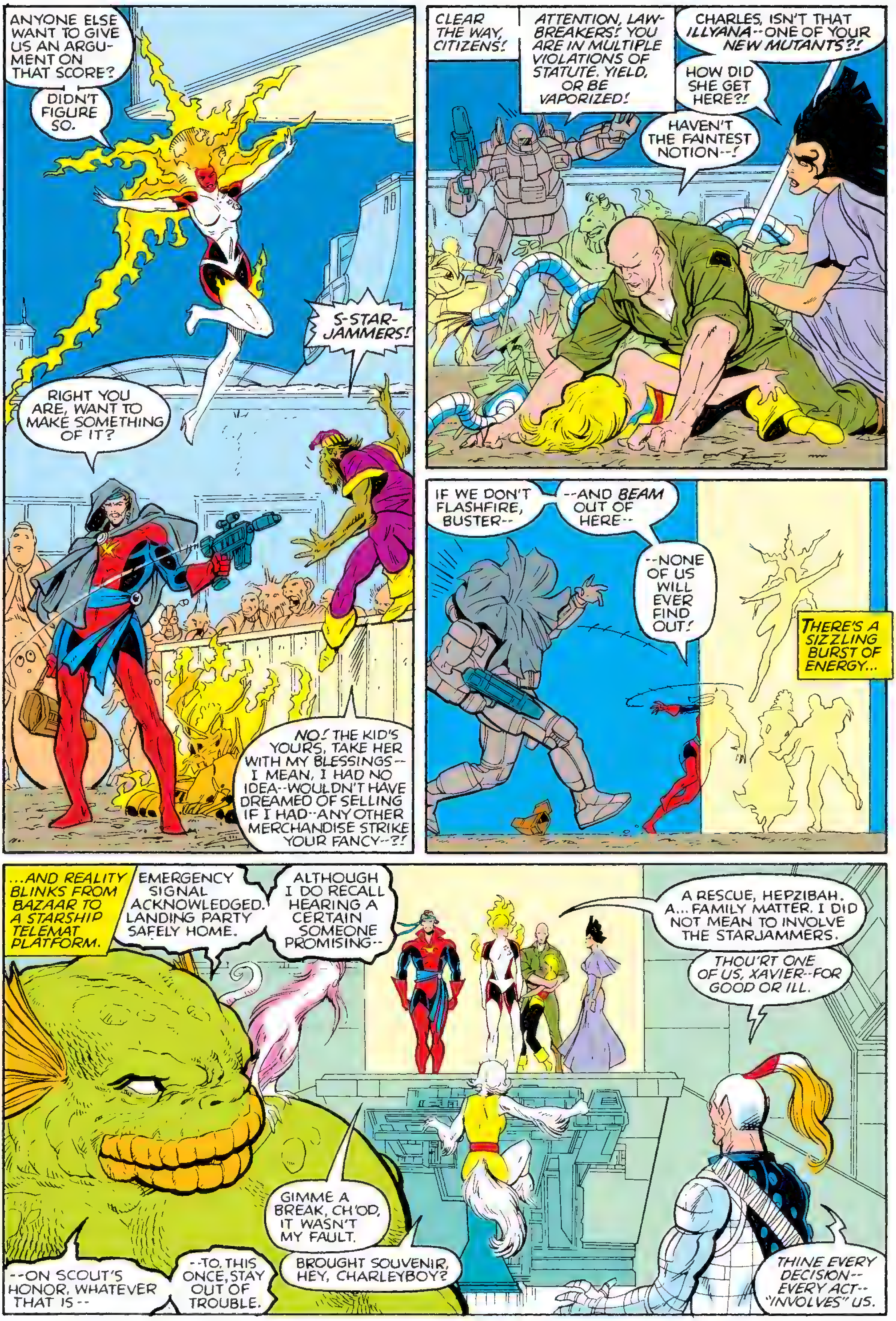

--IN MORE INTIMATE SURROUNDINGS.
THE BAR IS CROWDED, YET FOR ALL THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AND CLAMOROUS DIN, IT REMAINS A STRANGELY PRIVATE PLACE...
...WHOSE PATRONS--IF THEY KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THEM--MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.
SCAN COMPLETE, MY FRIENDS. ALL CLEAR.
"NO LAW. NO BOUNTY HUNTERS."
PLEASANT CHANGE, FOR ONCE.
IF ANY SHOW, I'LL DEAL WITH THEM.

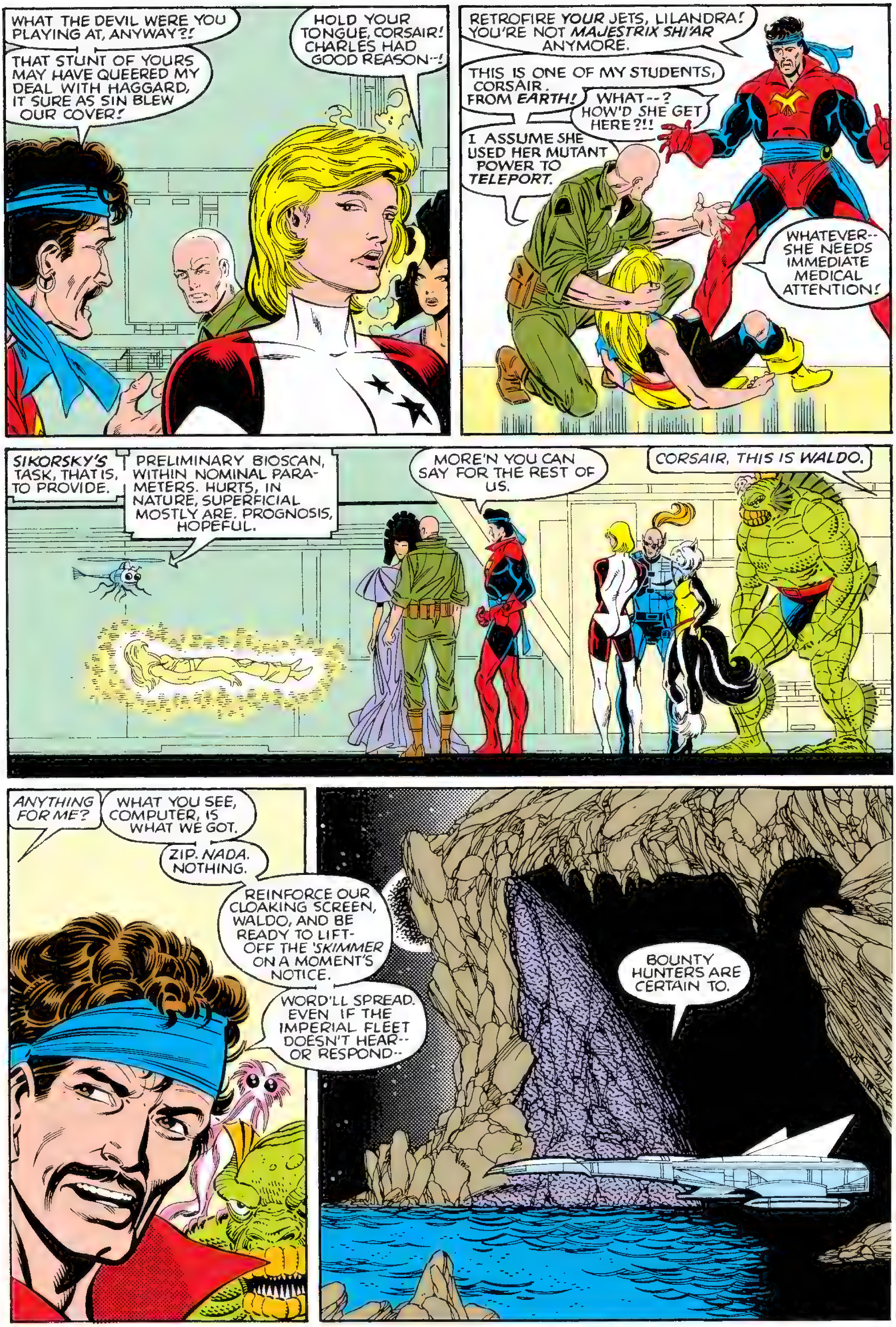

THERE'S OUR CONTACT.
HE OWNS THIS PLACE. WORD IS, NOTHING MOVES ON THIS ROCK WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE OR PERMISSION. IF ANYONE HAS WHAT WE NEED...
AND IF HE DOESN'T? OR TURNS US DOWN?
SHIP WON'T GO MUCH FARTHER WITHOUT MAJOR REPAIRS, HON. WE DON'T MAKE THEM--AND SOON--WE'RE DONE.

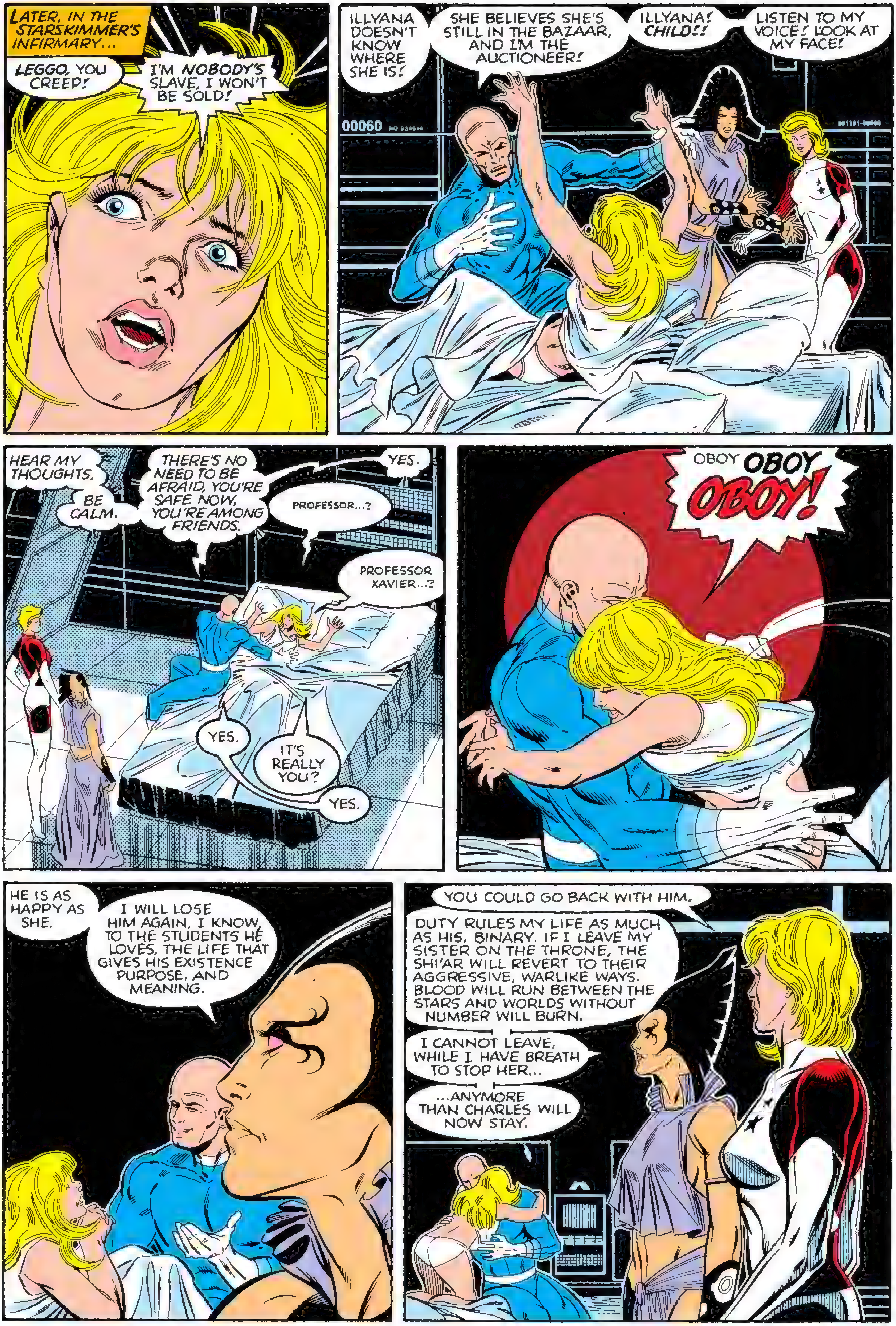

HAGGARD?
THE SAME. KNOW YOU, TOO.
BINARY. CORSAIR. STAR-JAMMERS.
IMPERIUM WANTS YOU VERY BADLY, WARRANTS ALL OVER, BIGGEST BOUNTY ANYONE'S EVER HEARD OF, A SPIRIT'S RANSOM.
YOU OF A MIND TO COLLECT?
NOT... TODAY.
THE ROOM IS COVERED BY PSI-DAMPERS. I CAN MAINTAIN A PASSIVE SCAN--TO WARN OURSELVES AND CORSAIR OF ANY ATTACK--BUT ANY ATTEMPT TO PROBE DEEPER WILL SET OFF ALARMS AND SOME VERY NASTY DEFENSES.
HAGGARD'S A CAREFUL MAN, MY LOVE.
THAT'S WHY HE'S SURVIVED SO LONG.
WE STARJAMMERS SHOULD PROFIT FROM HIS EXAMPLE.
"WE STARJAMMERS"--AMUSING, IS IT NOT, HOW EASILY THE EXPATRIATE EMPRESS ASSUMES THE ROLE OF PIRATE AND REBEL? I'M ALMOST TEMPTED TO LET MY SISTER...
...KEEP THE THRONE SHE STOLE FROM ME.
USS
CHARLES--WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE SO WITHDRAWN, IS THERE DANGER?!
I WAS THINKING OF THE NEW MUTANTS. I KNOW I LEFT THEM IN GOOD HANDS, LILANDRA, BUT IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THEY ARE MY CHILDREN. I CAN'T HELP WORRYING.
I PLEDGED MY WORD, CHARLES--SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY, WE SHALL RETURN YOU TO EARTH.
THAT SEEMS MORE AND MORE LIKE A DREAM--A HOLY GRAIL I'VE LOST, LIKE LANCELOT DID, NEVER TO FIND AGAIN.
THERE ARE TIMES I FEEL I'D PAY ANY PRICE, MAKE ANY SACRIFICE, TO GO HOME--
XAVIER'S SCHOOL
--AND YET...
...THERE ARE FAR WORSE FATES THAN EXILE, WITH THE WOMAN I LOVE.
I SUPPOSE I CAN ONLY HOPE AND PRAY I MADE THE RIGHT DECISION--
--LEAVING MAGNETO AS THE HEADMASTER OF MY SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS--
--AND ACCEPT THE HAPPINESS I HAVE...
...RATHER THAN CONSTANTLY YEARN FOR WHAT MIGHT NEVER--eh?!
THAT THOUGHT-FLASH--HERE--
--IMPOSSIBLE!?!
CHARLES, WHAT--?!
STAY HERE, LILANDRA! I'LL BE BACK, QUICK AS I CAN!

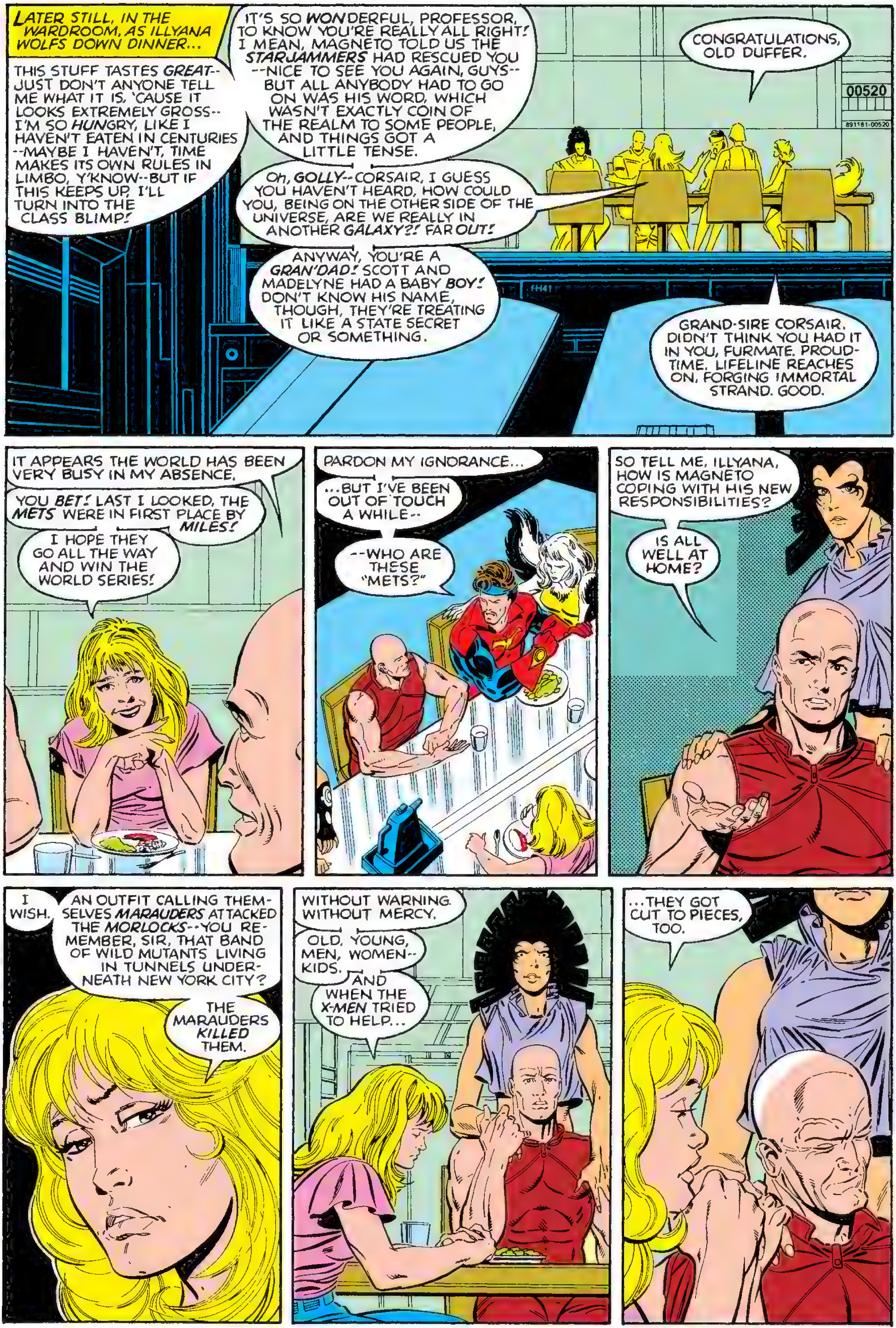

HER THOUGHTS--DISJOINTED--CONFUSED--THEY'RE LIKE A BEACON, LEADING ME TO HER--
CHARLES--!
SHE'S FAR MORE AFRAID THAN ANGRY. UNCHARACTERISTIC. I'D HAVE EXPECTED THE REVERSE.
SHE'S IN THE BAZAAR--
--ON THAT AUCTION BLOCK!
OUR LATEST OFFERING, GENTLE SENTIENTS!
NEO-SIMIAN HOMONID, MARGINALLY CIVILIZED--AND FULL OF SPIRIT!
USS NOSTROMO
WHO WOULDN'T LIKE TO TAME THIS WILDING, eh?!
BY GENDER, FEMALE--OMNIVOROUS AND ADOLESCENT--WHICH MEANS, FOR HER, THE BEST IS YET TO COME!
SHE POSSESSES FAIR NATIVE INTELLIGENCE, WITH AN EDUCATION TO MATCH, AND BY BASELINE STANDARDS ASSIGNED TO HER PHENOTYPE IS QUITE COMELY. SHE HAS NO PATRON, NO PAPERS...
LEMME GO!
YOU'RE NOT SELLING ME, YOU CREEP!
SWEETLING, I--AND YOUR NEW OWNER--WILL DO WITH YOU...
...WHATEVER WE PLEASE.
!Oh!
FZZPPT
A MOST TRACTABLE SOUL, NOBLE SENTIENTS, AS YOU CAN SEE. IT REQUIRED ONLY A MINIMAL SHOCKPULSE OF PLEASURE TO SUBDUE HER.
PROPER--AND PERMANENT--CONDITIONING SHOULD PROVE NO MORE DIFFICULT.
NOW, FOR THIS PRIME SPECIMEN...
...WHAT AM I BID?
SHE IS NOT FOR SALE.
YOUR ERROR, SENTIENT, BUT SHE IS.
I AM HER... PATRON. RELEASE HER.
NO ONE GIVES ME ORDERS ON MY OWN STAGE.
IF THIS BABE MEANS SO MUCH TO YOU...

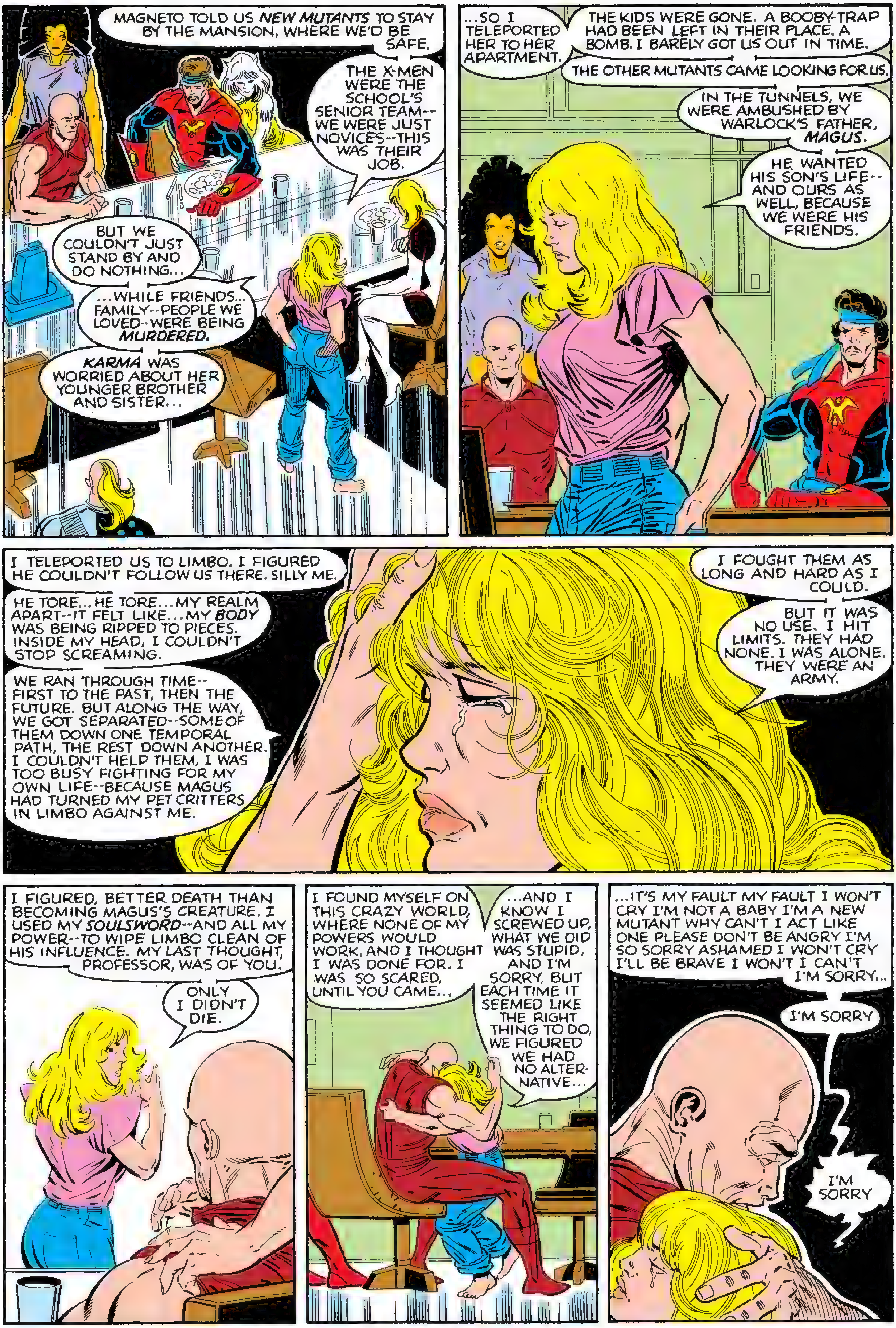

...THEN JOIN HER ON MY SLAVE-LINE!
SHE FELT PURE PLEASURE--
--BUT YOU'LL FEEL PAIN!
AGONY!
BUT...NON-PHYSICAL--
--WEAPON...ACTS ON NERVOUS SYSTEM...
...IT CAN ONLY... AFFECT ME...
...IF I ALLOW IT!
MY TELEPATHIC ABILITY MADE ME MORE VULNERABLE THAN MOST TO THIS PSYCHIC-ORIENTED ATTACK...
SOK!
...BUT IT ALSO GIVES ME THE STRENGTH AND SKILL TO RESIST!
POOR CHILD-- AWARE OF ALL THAT'S HAPPENING, BUT SHE DOESN'T CARE.
THANK HEAVEN THE EFFECT IS ONLY TEMPORARY.
I MUST GET HER TO SAFETY BEFORE--
YAIEOWH!
LAWBOTS!
MALEFACTOR APPREHENDED.
MY POWERS ARE USELESS AGAINST THEIR CYBERNETIC BRAINS!
CRIMINAL WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR PROCESSING.
PROPERTY WILL BE RESTORED TO RIGHTFUL OWNER.
WEREN'T YOU PAYING ATTENTION, ROBOT?!
THE KID ISN'T FOR SALE!
NO HUMAN BEING SHOULD EVER BE!
FWAM!
SKZARK!

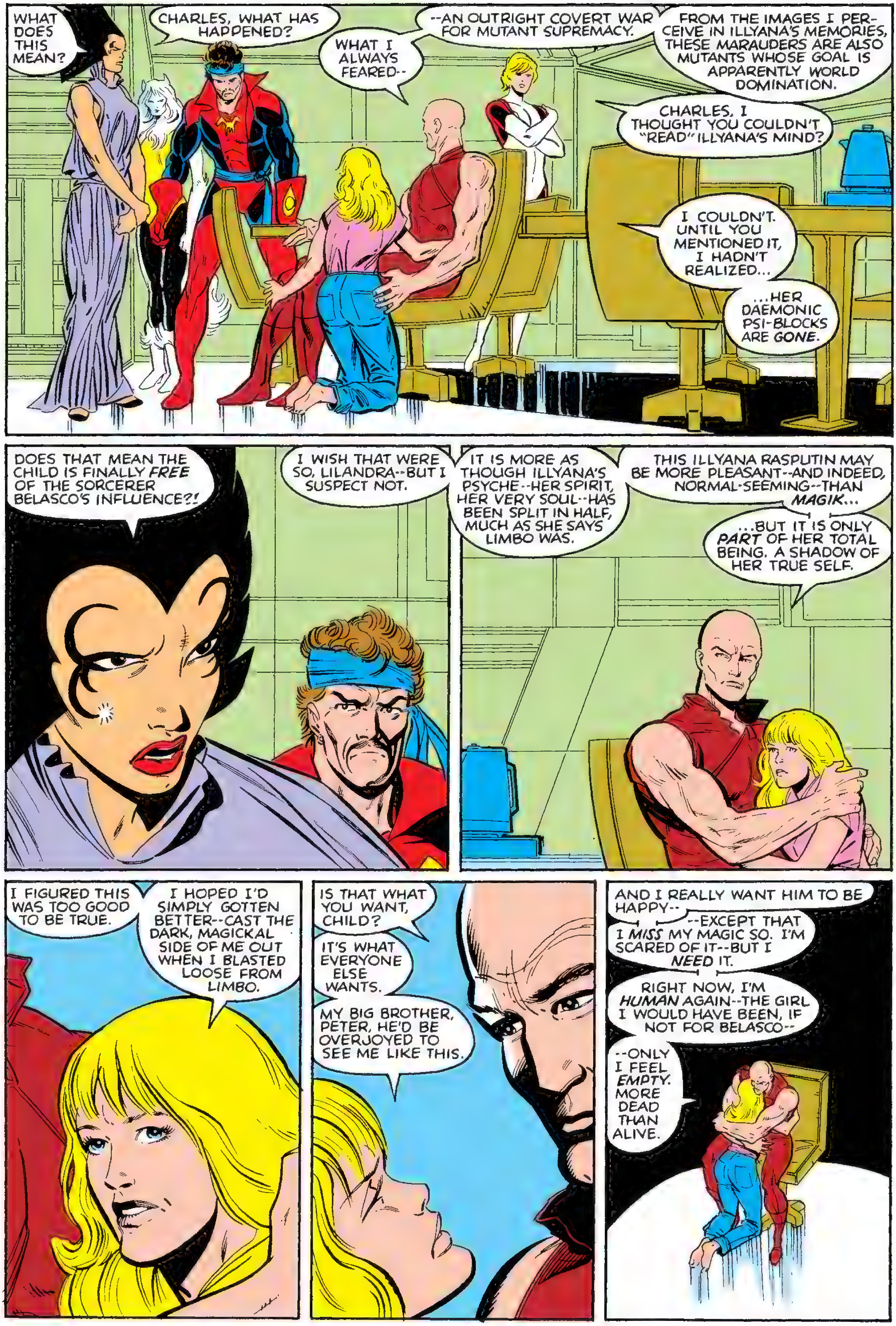

ANYONE ELSE WANT TO GIVE US AN ARGUMENT ON THAT SCORE?
DIDN'T FIGURE SO.
S-STAR-JAMMERS!
RIGHT YOU ARE, WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING OF IT?
NO! THE KID'S YOURS, TAKE HER WITH MY BLESSINGS-- I MEAN, I HAD NO IDEA--WOULDN'T HAVE DREAMED OF SELLING IF I HAD--ANY OTHER MERCHANDISE STRIKE YOUR FANCY--?!
CLEAR THE WAY, CITIZENS!
ATTENTION, LAW-BREAKERS! YOU ARE IN MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS OF STATUTE. YIELD, OR BE VAPORIZED!
CHARLES, ISN'T THAT ILLYANA--ONE OF YOUR NEW MUTANTS?!
HOW DID SHE GET HERE?!
HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST NOTION--!
IF WE DON'T FLASHFIRE, BUSTER--
--AND BEAM OUT OF HERE--
--NONE OF US WILL EVER FIND OUT!
THERE'S A SIZZLING BURST OF ENERGY...
...AND REALITY BLINKS FROM BAZAAR TO A STARSHIP TELEMAT PLATFORM.
EMERGENCY SIGNAL ACKNOWLEDGED. LANDING PARTY SAFELY HOME.
ALTHOUGH I DO RECALL HEARING A CERTAIN SOMEONE PROMISING--
--ON SCOUT'S HONOR, WHATEVER THAT IS--
--TO, THIS ONCE, STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.
GIMME A BREAK, CH'OD, IT WASN'T MY FAULT.
BROUGHT SOUVENIR, HEY, CHARLEYBOY?
A RESCUE, HEPZIBAH. A... FAMILY MATTER. I DID NOT MEAN TO INVOLVE THE STARJAMMERS.
THOU'RT ONE OF US, XAVIER--FOR GOOD OR ILL.
THINE EVERY DECISION-- EVERY ACT-- "INVOLVES" US.

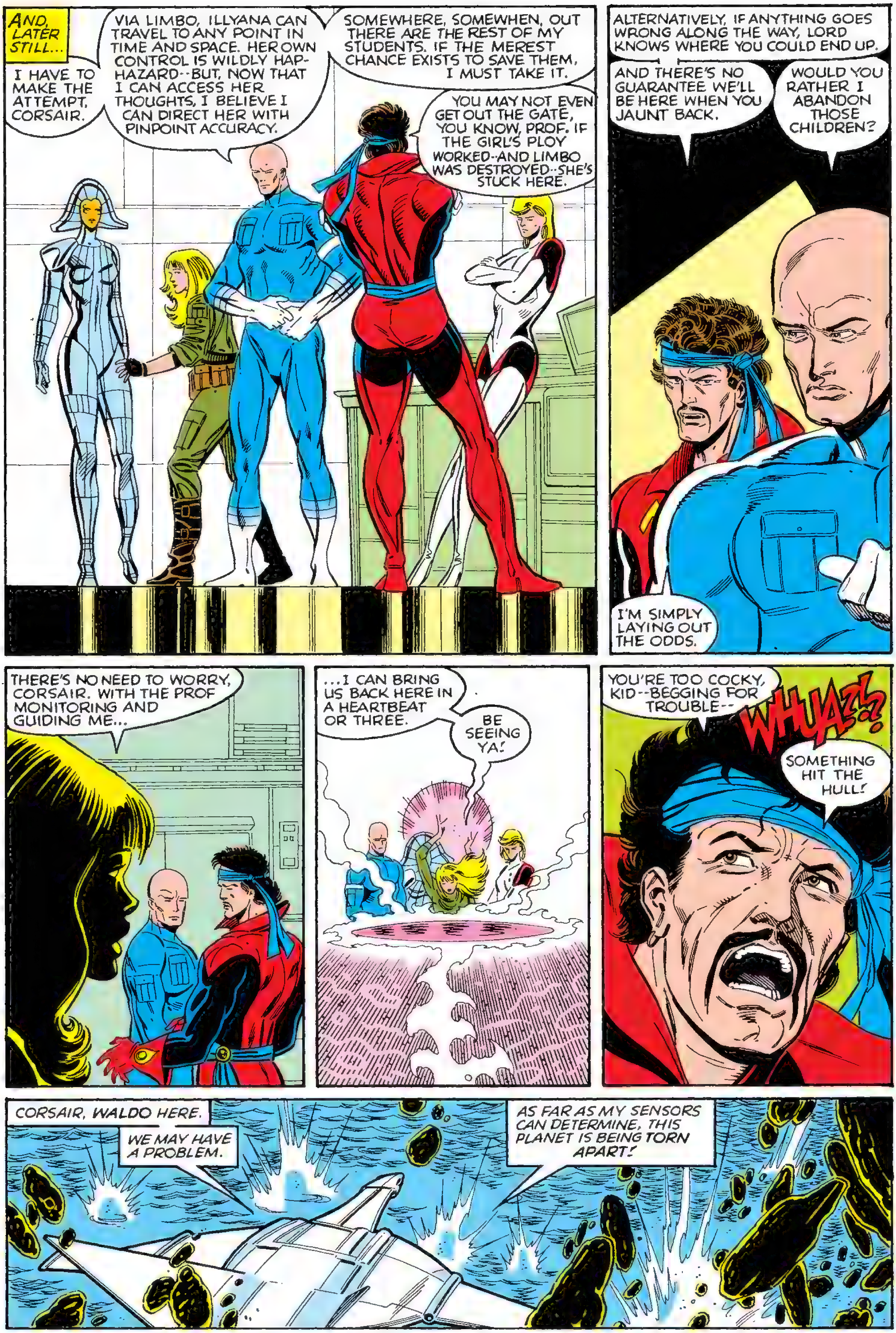

WHAT THE DEVIL WERE YOU PLAYING AT, ANYWAY?!
THAT STUNT OF YOURS MAY HAVE QUEERED MY DEAL WITH HAGGARD, IT SURE AS SIN BLEW OUR COVER!
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, CORSAIR! CHARLES HAD GOOD REASON--!
RETROFIRE *YOUR* JETS, LILANDRA! YOU'RE NOT *MAJESTRIX SHI'AR* ANYMORE.
THIS IS ONE OF MY STUDENTS, CORSAIR. FROM *EARTH!*
WHAT--? HOW'D SHE GET HERE?!!
I ASSUME SHE USED HER MUTANT POWER TO *TELEPORT.*
WHATEVER-- SHE NEEDS IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION!
SIKORSKY'S TASK, THAT IS, TO PROVIDE.
PRELIMINARY BIOSCAN, WITHIN NOMINAL PARAMETERS. HURTS, IN NATURE, SUPERFICIAL MOSTLY ARE. PROGNOSIS, HOPEFUL.
MORE'N YOU CAN SAY FOR THE REST OF US.
CORSAIR, THIS IS WALDO.
ANYTHING FOR ME?
WHAT YOU SEE, COMPUTER, IS WHAT WE GOT.
ZIP. *NADA.* NOTHING.
REINFORCE OUR CLOAKING SCREEN, WALDO, AND BE READY TO LIFT-OFF THE *'SKIMMER* ON A MOMENT'S NOTICE.
WORD'LL SPREAD. EVEN IF THE IMPERIAL FLEET DOESN'T HEAR-- OR RESPOND--
BOUNTY HUNTERS ARE CERTAIN TO.

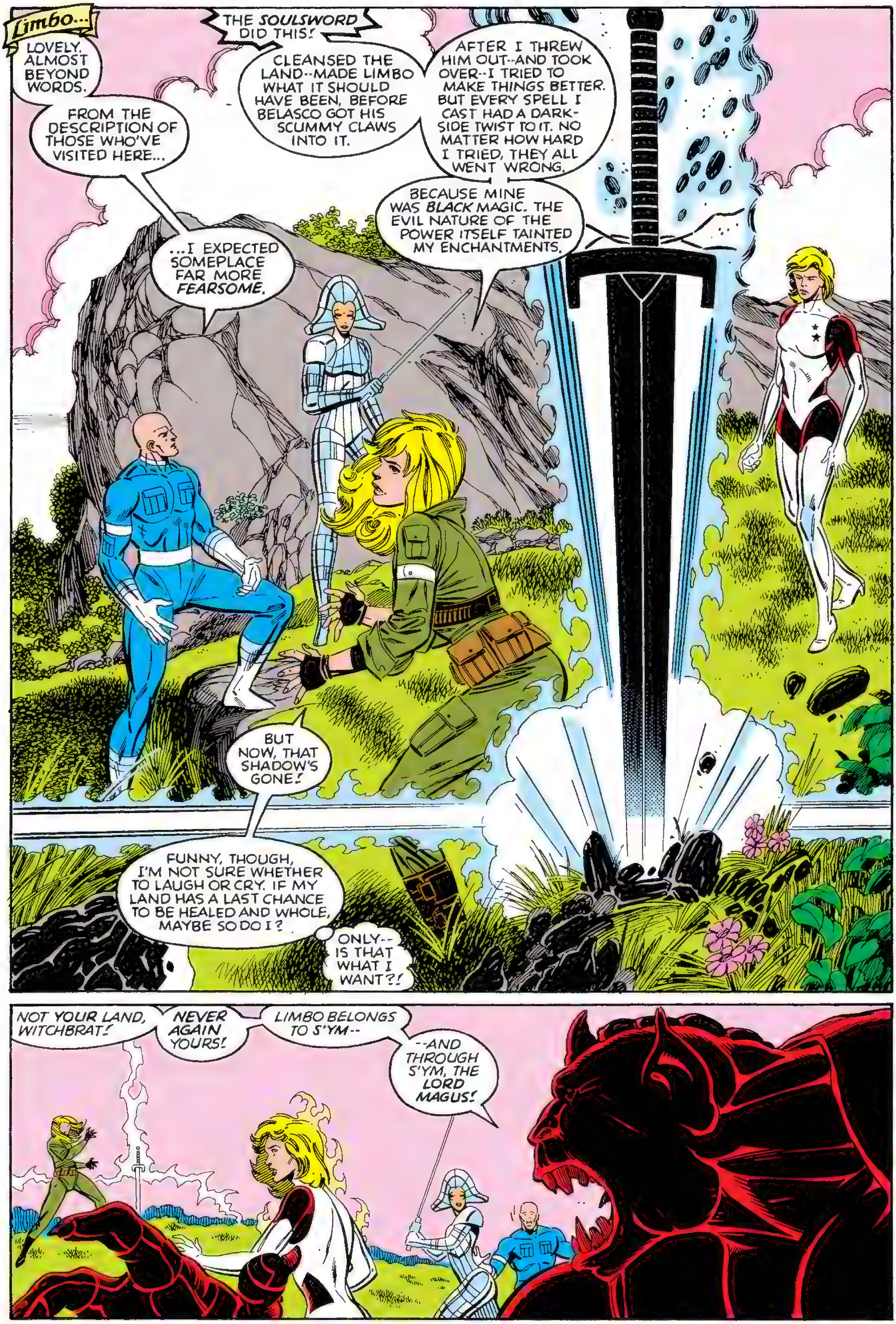

LATER, IN THE STARSKIMMER'S INFIRMARY...
LEGGO, YOU CREEP!
I'M NOBODY'S SLAVE, I WON'T BE SOLD!
ILLYANA DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS!
SHE BELIEVES SHE'S STILL IN THE BAZAAR, AND I'M THE AUCTIONEER!
ILLYANA! CHILD!!
LISTEN TO MY VOICE! LOOK AT MY FACE!
00060
HEAR MY THOUGHTS.
BE CALM.
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID, YOU'RE SAFE NOW, YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS.
YES.
PROFESSOR...?
PROFESSOR XAVIER...?
YES.
IT'S REALLY YOU?
YES.
OBOY OBOY OBOY!
HE IS AS HAPPY AS SHE.
I WILL LOSE HIM AGAIN, I KNOW, TO THE STUDENTS HE LOVES, THE LIFE THAT GIVES HIS EXISTENCE PURPOSE, AND MEANING.
YOU COULD GO BACK WITH HIM.
DUTY RULES MY LIFE AS MUCH AS HIS, BINARY. IF I LEAVE MY SISTER ON THE THRONE, THE SHI'AR WILL REVERT TO THEIR AGGRESSIVE, WARLIKE WAYS. BLOOD WILL RUN BETWEEN THE STARS AND WORLDS WITHOUT NUMBER WILL BURN.
I CANNOT LEAVE, WHILE I HAVE BREATH TO STOP HER...
...ANYMORE THAN CHARLES WILL NOW STAY.

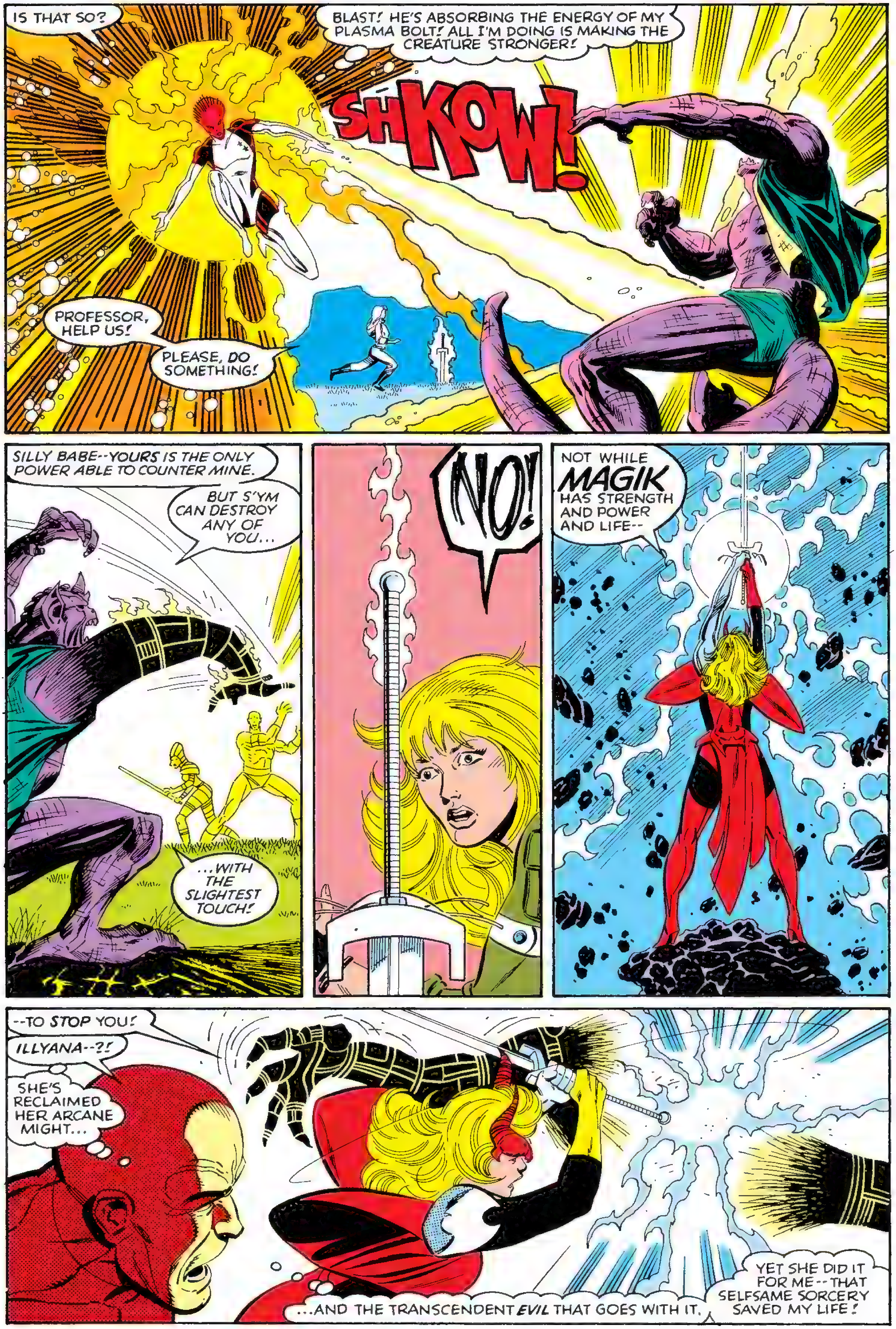

LATER STILL, IN THE WARDROOM, AS ILLYANA WOLFS DOWN DINNER...
THIS STUFF TASTES GREAT--JUST DON'T ANYONE TELL ME WHAT IT IS, 'CAUSE IT LOOKS EXTREMELY GROSS--I'M SO HUNGRY, LIKE I HAVEN'T EATEN IN CENTURIES--MAYBE I HAVEN'T, TIME MAKES ITS OWN RULES IN LIMBO, Y'KNOW--BUT IF THIS KEEPS UP, I'LL TURN INTO THE CLASS BLIMP!
IT'S SO WONDERFUL, PROFESSOR, TO KNOW YOU'RE REALLY ALL RIGHT! I MEAN, MAGNETO TOLD US THE STARJAMMERS HAD RESCUED YOU--NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, GUYS--BUT ALL ANYBODY HAD TO GO ON WAS HIS WORD, WHICH WASN'T EXACTLY COIN OF THE REALM TO SOME PEOPLE, AND THINGS GOT A LITTLE TENSE.
CONGRATULATIONS, OLD DUFFER.
00520
891181-00520
Oh, GOLLY--CORSAIR, I GUESS YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, HOW COULD YOU, BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE, ARE WE REALLY IN ANOTHER GALAXY?! FAR OUT!
ANYWAY, YOU'RE A GRAN'DAD! SCOTT AND MADELYNE HAD A BABY BOY! DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, THOUGH, THEY'RE TREATING IT LIKE A STATE SECRET OR SOMETHING.
FH41
GRAND-SIRE CORSAIR. DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN YOU, FURMATE. PROUD-TIME. LIFELINE REACHES ON, FORGING IMMORTAL STRAND. GOOD.
IT APPEARS THE WORLD HAS BEEN VERY BUSY IN MY ABSENCE.
YOU BET! LAST I LOOKED, THE METS WERE IN FIRST PLACE BY MILES!
I HOPE THEY GO ALL THE WAY AND WIN THE WORLD SERIES!
PARDON MY IGNORANCE...
...BUT I'VE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH A WHILE--
--WHO ARE THESE "METS?"
SO TELL ME, ILLYANA, HOW IS MAGNETO COPING WITH HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES?
IS ALL WELL AT HOME?
I WISH.
AN OUTFIT CALLING THEMSELVES MARAUDERS ATTACKED THE MORLOCKS--YOU REMEMBER, SIR, THAT BAND OF WILD MUTANTS LIVING IN TUNNELS UNDERNEATH NEW YORK CITY?
THE MARAUDERS KILLED THEM.
WITHOUT WARNING. WITHOUT MERCY.
OLD, YOUNG, MEN, WOMEN--KIDS.
AND WHEN THE X-MEN TRIED TO HELP...
...THEY GOT CUT TO PIECES, TOO.

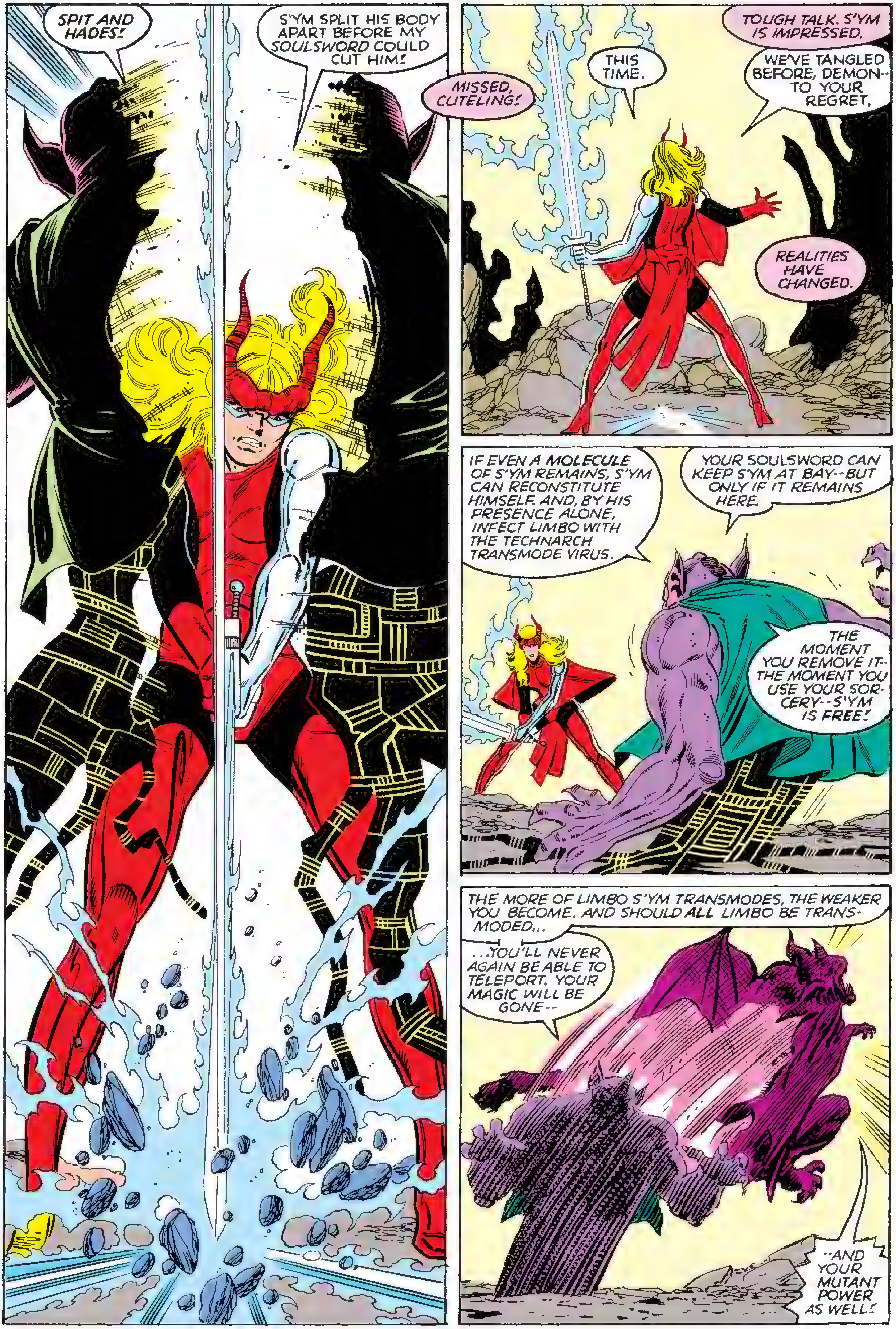

MAGNETO TOLD US *NEW MUTANTS* TO STAY BY THE MANSION, WHERE WE'D BE SAFE.
THE X-MEN WERE THE SCHOOL'S SENIOR TEAM--WE WERE JUST NOVICES--THIS WAS THEIR JOB.
BUT WE COULDN'T JUST STAND BY AND DO NOTHING...
...WHILE FRIENDS...FAMILY--PEOPLE WE LOVED--WERE BEING *MURDERED*.
KARMA WAS WORRIED ABOUT HER YOUNGER BROTHER AND SISTER...
...SO I TELEPORTED HER TO HER APARTMENT.
THE KIDS WERE GONE. A BOOBY-TRAP HAD BEEN LEFT IN THEIR PLACE. A BOMB. I BARELY GOT US OUT IN TIME.
THE OTHER MUTANTS CAME LOOKING FOR US.
IN THE TUNNELS, WE WERE AMBUSHED BY WARLOCK'S FATHER, *MAGUS*.
HE WANTED HIS SON'S LIFE--AND OURS AS WELL, BECAUSE WE WERE HIS FRIENDS.
I TELEPORTED US TO LIMBO. I FIGURED HE COULDN'T FOLLOW US THERE. SILLY ME.
HE TORE...HE TORE...MY REALM APART--IT FELT LIKE...MY *BODY* WAS BEING RIPPED TO PIECES. INSIDE MY HEAD, I COULDN'T STOP SCREAMING.
WE RAN THROUGH TIME--FIRST TO THE PAST, THEN THE FUTURE. BUT ALONG THE WAY, WE GOT SEPARATED--SOME OF THEM DOWN ONE TEMPORAL PATH, THE REST DOWN ANOTHER. I COULDN'T HELP THEM, I WAS TOO BUSY FIGHTING FOR MY OWN LIFE--BECAUSE MAGUS HAD TURNED MY PET CRITTERS IN LIMBO AGAINST ME.
I FOUGHT THEM AS LONG AND HARD AS I COULD.
BUT IT WAS NO USE. I HIT LIMITS. THEY HAD NONE. I WAS ALONE. THEY WERE AN ARMY.
I FIGURED, BETTER DEATH THAN BECOMING MAGUS'S CREATURE. I USED MY *SOULSWORD*--AND ALL MY POWER--TO WIPE LIMBO CLEAN OF HIS INFLUENCE. MY LAST THOUGHT, PROFESSOR, WAS OF YOU.
ONLY I DIDN'T DIE.
I FOUND MYSELF ON THIS CRAZY WORLD, WHERE NONE OF MY POWERS WOULD WORK, AND I THOUGHT I WAS DONE FOR. I WAS SO SCARED, UNTIL YOU CAME...
...AND I KNOW I SCREWED UP, WHAT WE DID WAS STUPID, AND I'M SORRY, BUT EACH TIME IT SEEMED LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO, WE FIGURED WE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE...
...IT'S MY FAULT MY FAULT I WON'T CRY I'M NOT A BABY I'M A NEW MUTANT WHY CAN'T I ACT LIKE ONE PLEASE DON'T BE ANGRY I'M SO SORRY ASHAMED I WON'T CRY I'LL BE BRAVE I WON'T I CAN'T I'M SORRY...
I'M SORRY
I'M SORRY

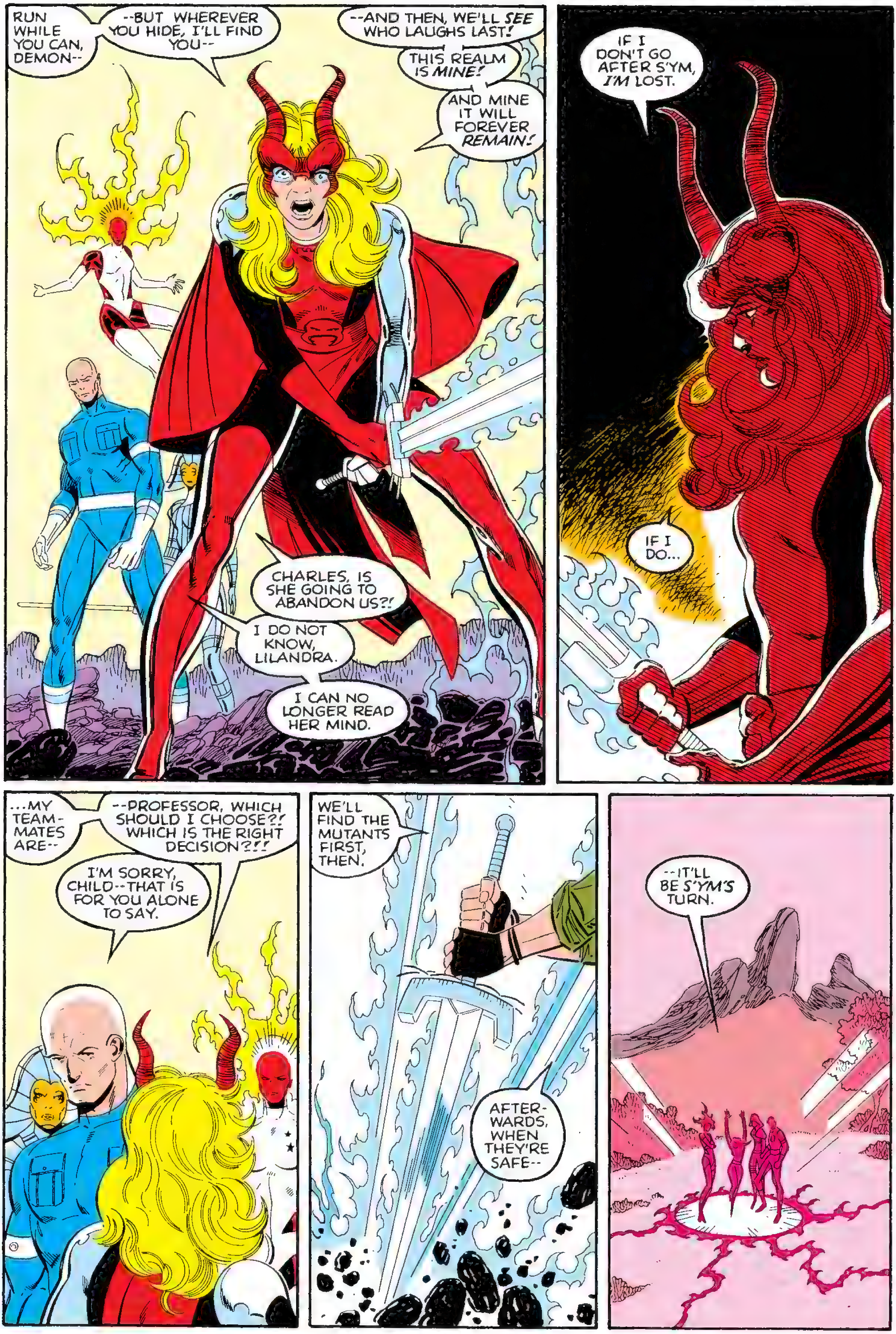

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
CHARLES, WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
WHAT I ALWAYS FEARED--
--AN OUTRIGHT COVERT WAR FOR MUTANT SUPREMACY.
FROM THE IMAGES I PERCEIVE IN ILLYANA'S MEMORIES, THESE MARAUDERS ARE ALSO MUTANTS WHOSE GOAL IS APPARENTLY WORLD DOMINATION.
CHARLES, I THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T "READ" ILLYANA'S MIND?
I COULDN'T. UNTIL YOU MENTIONED IT, I HADN'T REALIZED...
...HER DAEMONIC PSI-BLOCKS ARE *GONE*.
DOES THAT MEAN THE CHILD IS FINALLY *FREE* OF THE SORCERER BELASCO'S INFLUENCE?!
I WISH THAT WERE SO, LILANDRA--BUT I SUSPECT NOT.
IT IS MORE AS THOUGH ILLYANA'S PSYCHE--HER SPIRIT, HER VERY SOUL--HAS BEEN SPLIT IN HALF, MUCH AS SHE SAYS LIMBO WAS.
THIS ILLYANA RASPUTIN MAY BE MORE PLEASANT--AND INDEED, NORMAL-SEEMING--THAN *MAGIK*...
...BUT IT IS ONLY *PART* OF HER TOTAL BEING. A SHADOW OF HER TRUE SELF.
I FIGURED THIS WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
I HOPED I'D SIMPLY GOTTEN BETTER--CAST THE DARK, MAGICKAL SIDE OF ME OUT WHEN I BLASTED LOOSE FROM LIMBO.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, CHILD?
IT'S WHAT EVERYONE ELSE WANTS.
MY BIG BROTHER, PETER, HE'D BE OVERJOYED TO SEE ME LIKE THIS.
AND I REALLY WANT HIM TO BE HAPPY--
--EXCEPT THAT I *MISS* MY MAGIC SO. I'M SCARED OF IT--BUT I *NEED* IT.
RIGHT NOW, I'M *HUMAN* AGAIN--THE GIRL I WOULD HAVE BEEN, IF NOT FOR BELASCO--
--ONLY I FEEL *EMPTY*. MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.

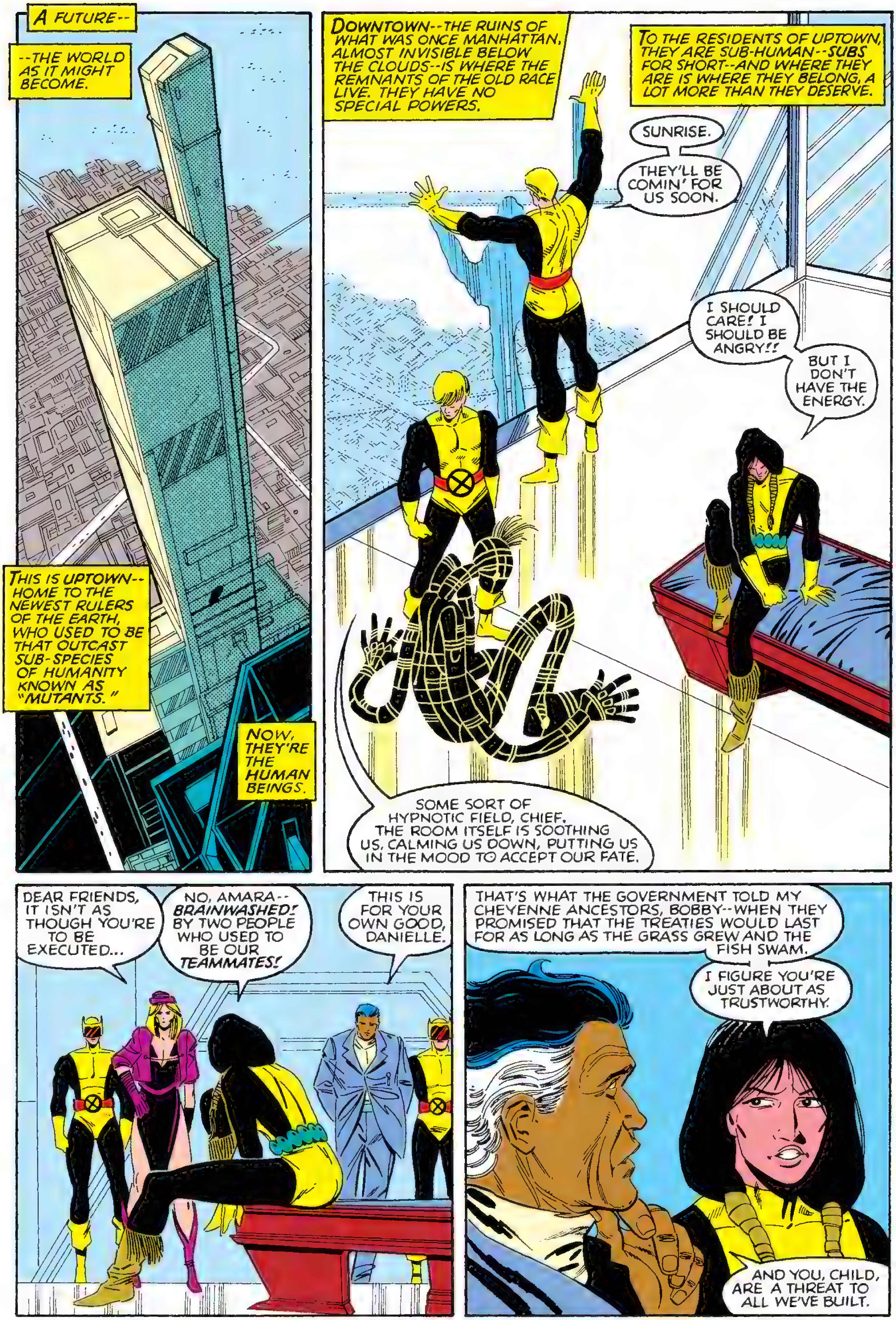

AND, LATER STILL...
I HAVE TO MAKE THE ATTEMPT, CORSAIR.
VIA LIMBO, ILLYANA CAN TRAVEL TO ANY POINT IN TIME AND SPACE. HER OWN CONTROL IS WILDLY HAPHAZARD--BUT, NOW THAT I CAN ACCESS HER THOUGHTS, I BELIEVE I CAN DIRECT HER WITH PINPOINT ACCURACY.
SOMEWHERE, SOMEWHEN, OUT THERE ARE THE REST OF MY STUDENTS. IF THE MEREST CHANCE EXISTS TO SAVE THEM, I MUST TAKE IT.
YOU MAY NOT EVEN GET OUT THE GATE, YOU KNOW, PROF. IF THE GIRL'S PLOY WORKED--AND LIMBO WAS DESTROYED--SHE'S STUCK HERE.
ALTERNATIVELY, IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG ALONG THE WAY, LORD KNOWS WHERE YOU COULD END UP.
AND THERE'S NO GUARANTEE WE'LL BE HERE WHEN YOU JAUNT BACK.
WOULD YOU RATHER I ABANDON THOSE CHILDREN?
I'M SIMPLY LAYING OUT THE ODDS.
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY, CORSAIR. WITH THE PROF MONITORING AND GUIDING ME...
...I CAN BRING US BACK HERE IN A HEARTBEAT OR THREE.
BE SEEING YA!
YOU'RE TOO COCKY, KID--BEGGING FOR TROUBLE--
WHUA?!?
SOMETHING HIT THE HULL!
CORSAIR, WALDO HERE.
WE MAY HAVE A PROBLEM.
AS FAR AS MY SENSORS CAN DETERMINE, THIS PLANET IS BEING TORN APART!

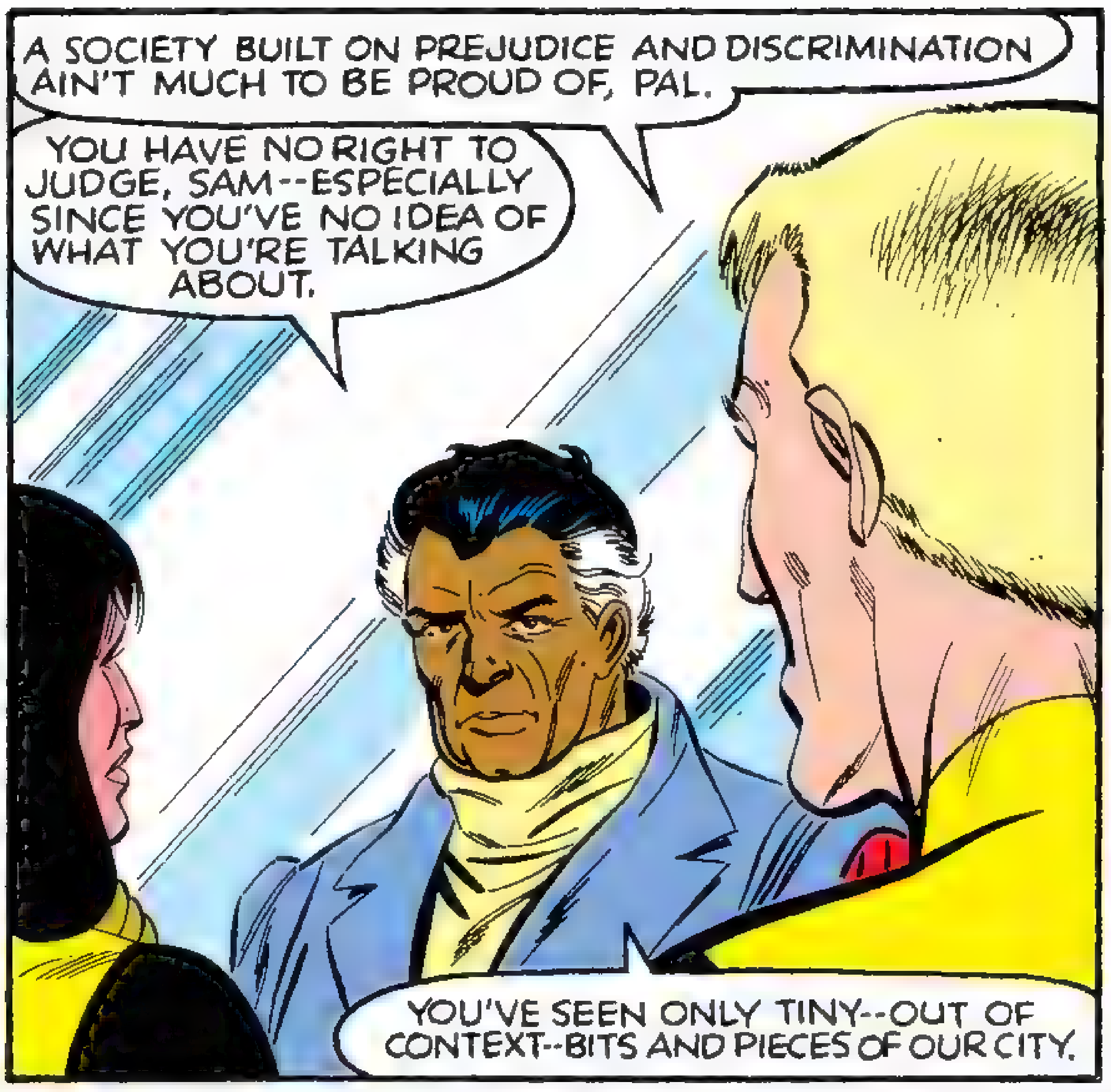

Limbo...
LOVELY. ALMOST BEYOND WORDS.
FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF THOSE WHO'VE VISITED HERE...
...I EXPECTED SOMEPLACE FAR MORE *FEARSOME.*
THE *SOULSWORD* DID THIS!
CLEANSED THE LAND--MADE LIMBO WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN, BEFORE BELASCO GOT HIS SCUMMY CLAWS INTO IT.
AFTER I THREW HIM OUT--AND TOOK OVER--I TRIED TO MAKE THINGS BETTER. BUT EVERY SPELL I CAST HAD A DARK-SIDE TWIST TO IT. NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED, THEY ALL WENT WRONG.
BECAUSE MINE WAS *BLACK* MAGIC. THE EVIL NATURE OF THE POWER ITSELF TAINTED MY ENCHANTMENTS.
BUT NOW, THAT SHADOW'S GONE!
FUNNY, THOUGH, I'M NOT SURE WHETHER TO LAUGH OR CRY. IF MY LAND HAS A LAST CHANCE TO BE HEALED AND WHOLE, MAYBE SO DO I?
ONLY-- IS THAT WHAT I WANT?!
NOT YOUR LAND, WITCHBRAT!
NEVER AGAIN YOURS!
LIMBO BELONGS TO S'YM--
--AND THROUGH S'YM, THE LORD MAGUS!

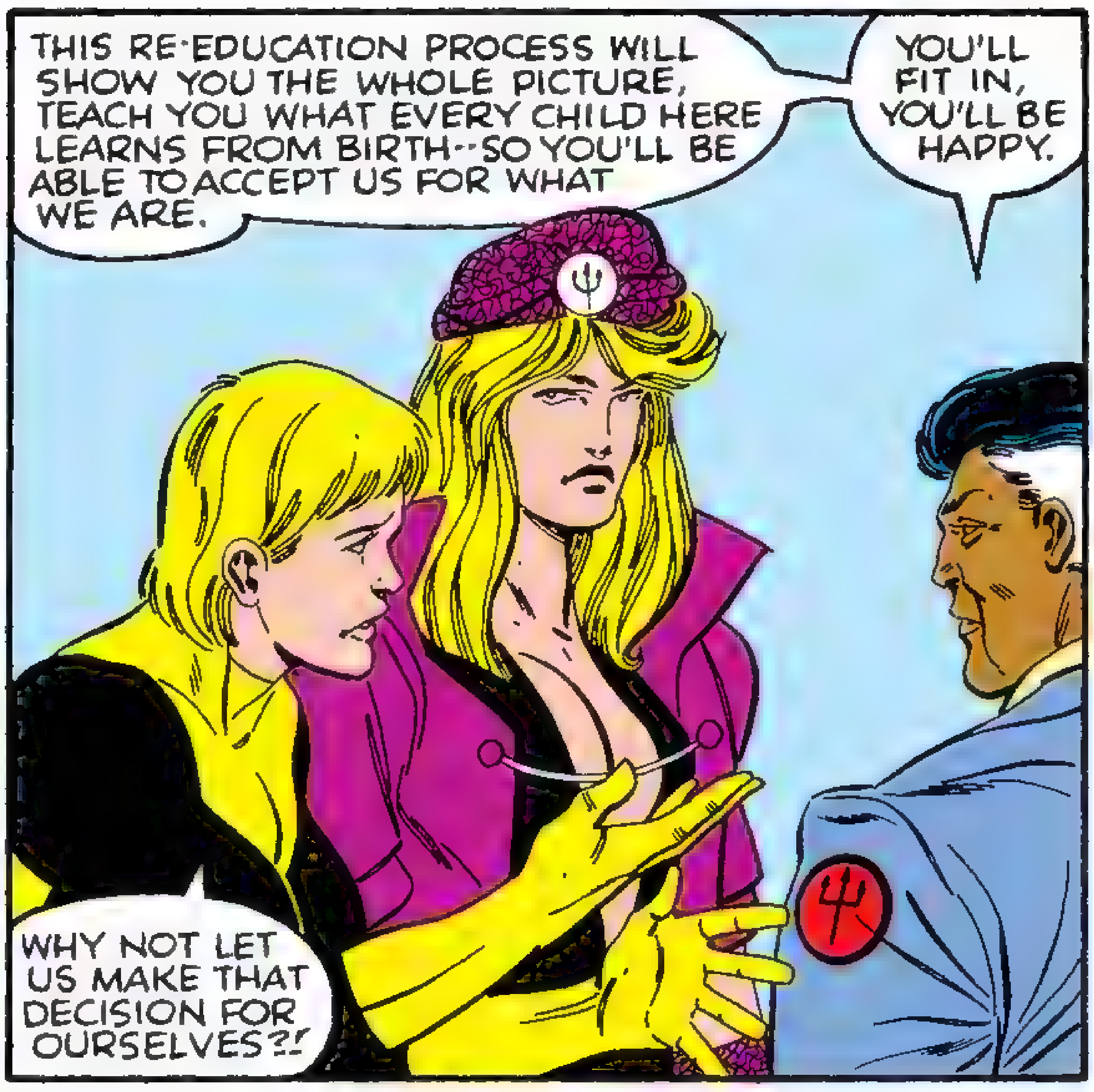

IS THAT SO?
BLAST! HE'S ABSORBING THE ENERGY OF MY PLASMA BOLT! ALL I'M DOING IS MAKING THE CREATURE STRONGER!
SHKOW!
PROFESSOR, HELP US!
PLEASE, DO SOMETHING!
SILLY BABE--YOURS IS THE ONLY POWER ABLE TO COUNTER MINE.
BUT S'YM CAN DESTROY ANY OF YOU...
...WITH THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH!
NO!
NOT WHILE MAGIK HAS STRENGTH AND POWER AND LIFE--
--TO STOP YOU!
ILLYANA--?!
SHE'S RECLAIMED HER ARCANE MIGHT...
...AND THE TRANSCENDENT EVIL THAT GOES WITH IT.
YET SHE DID IT FOR ME--THAT SELFSAME SORCERY SAVED MY LIFE!

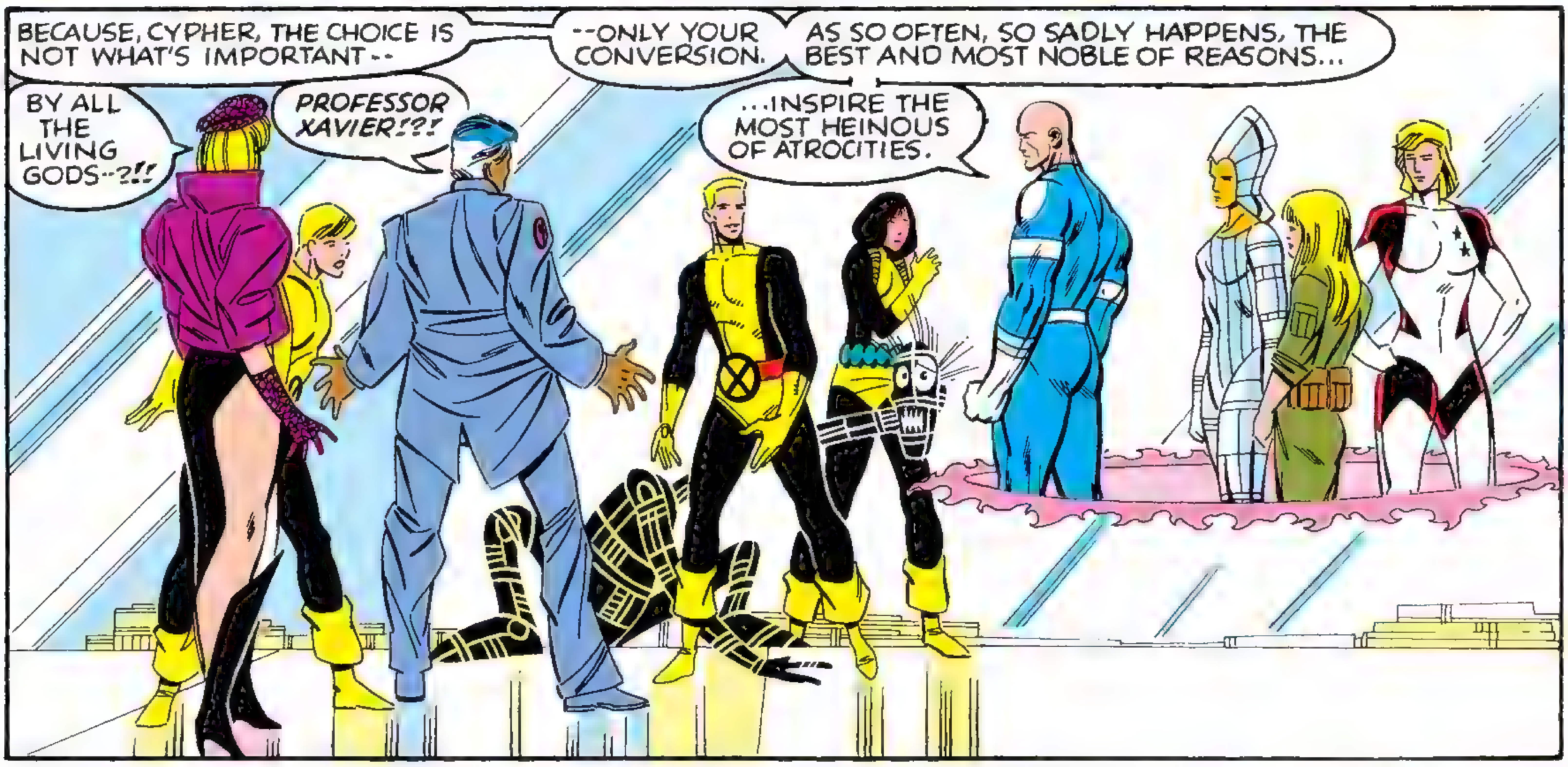

SPIT AND HADES!
S'YM SPLIT HIS BODY APART BEFORE MY SOULSWORD COULD CUT HIM!
MISSED, CUTELING!
THIS TIME.
TOUGH TALK. S'YM IS IMPRESSED.
WE'VE TANGLED BEFORE, DEMON--TO YOUR REGRET,
REALITIES HAVE CHANGED.
IF EVEN A MOLECULE OF S'YM REMAINS, S'YM CAN RECONSTITUTE HIMSELF. AND, BY HIS PRESENCE ALONE, INFECT LIMBO WITH THE TECHNARCH TRANSMODE VIRUS.
YOUR SOULSWORD CAN KEEP S'YM AT BAY--BUT ONLY IF IT REMAINS HERE.
THE MOMENT YOU REMOVE IT--THE MOMENT YOU USE YOUR SORCERY--S'YM IS FREE!
THE MORE OF LIMBO S'YM TRANSMODES, THE WEAKER YOU BECOME. AND SHOULD ALL LIMBO BE TRANSMODED...
...YOU'LL NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO TELEPORT. YOUR MAGIC WILL BE GONE--
--AND YOUR MUTANT POWER AS WELL!

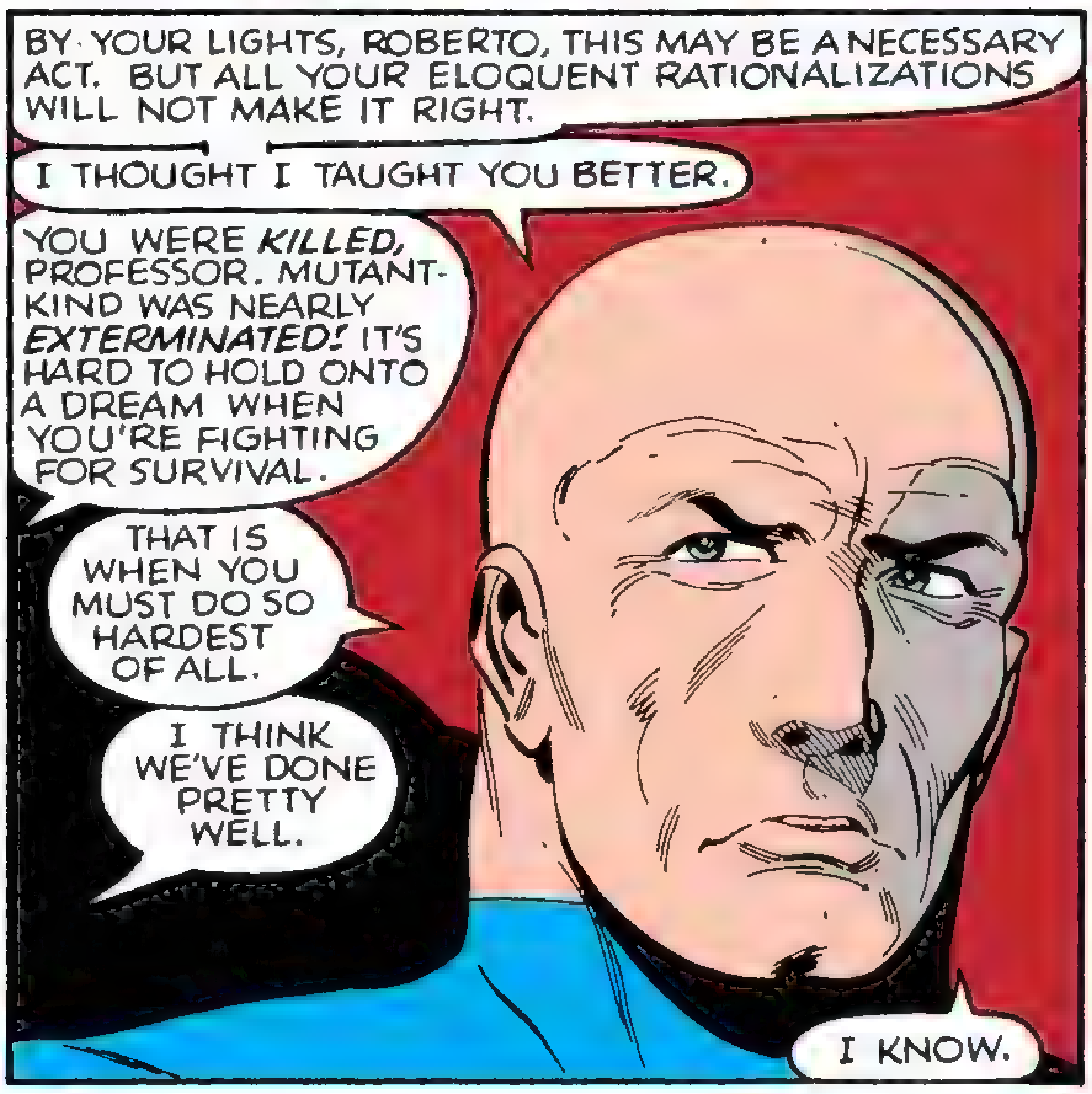

RUN WHILE YOU CAN, DEMON--
--BUT WHEREVER YOU HIDE, I'LL FIND YOU--
--AND THEN, WE'LL *SEE* WHO LAUGHS LAST!
THIS REALM IS *MINE!*
AND MINE IT WILL FOREVER *REMAIN!*
CHARLES, IS SHE GOING TO ABANDON US?!
I DO NOT KNOW, LILANDRA.
I CAN NO LONGER READ HER MIND.
IF I DON'T GO AFTER S'YM, *I'M* LOST.
IF I DO...
...MY TEAM-MATES ARE--
--PROFESSOR, WHICH SHOULD I CHOOSE?! WHICH IS THE RIGHT DECISION?!!
I'M SORRY, CHILD--THAT IS FOR YOU ALONE TO SAY.
WE'LL FIND THE MUTANTS FIRST, THEN.
AFTER-WARDS, WHEN THEY'RE SAFE--
--IT'LL BE *S'YM'S* TURN.

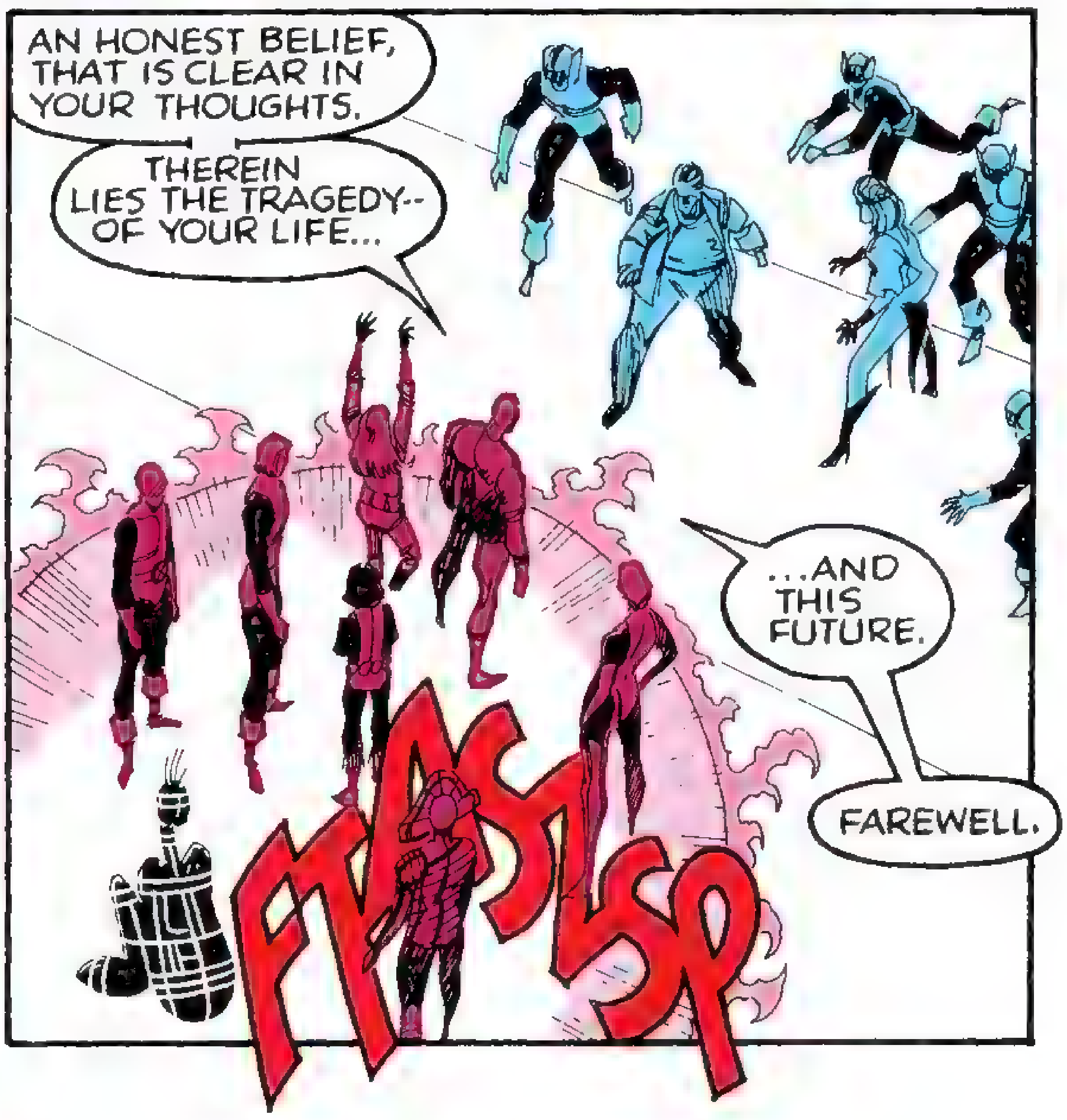

A FUTURE--
--THE WORLD AS IT MIGHT BECOME.
THIS IS UPTOWN-- HOME TO THE NEWEST RULERS OF THE EARTH, WHO USED TO BE THAT OUTCAST SUB-SPECIES OF HUMANITY KNOWN AS "MUTANTS."
NOW, THEY'RE THE HUMAN BEINGS.
DOWNTOWN--THE RUINS OF WHAT WAS ONCE MANHATTAN, ALMOST INVISIBLE BELOW THE CLOUDS--IS WHERE THE REMNANTS OF THE OLD RACE LIVE. THEY HAVE NO SPECIAL POWERS.
TO THE RESIDENTS OF UPTOWN, THEY ARE SUB-HUMAN--SUBS FOR SHORT--AND WHERE THEY ARE IS WHERE THEY BELONG, A LOT MORE THAN THEY DESERVE.
SUNRISE.
THEY'LL BE COMIN' FOR US SOON.
I SHOULD CARE! I SHOULD BE ANGRY!!
BUT I DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY.
SOME SORT OF HYPNOTIC FIELD, CHIEF. THE ROOM ITSELF IS SOOTHING US, CALMING US DOWN, PUTTING US IN THE MOOD TO ACCEPT OUR FATE.
DEAR FRIENDS, IT ISN'T AS THOUGH YOU'RE TO BE EXECUTED...
NO, AMARA-- BRAINWASHED! BY TWO PEOPLE WHO USED TO BE OUR TEAMMATES!
THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, DANIELLE.
THAT'S WHAT THE GOVERNMENT TOLD MY CHEYENNE ANCESTORS, BOBBY--WHEN THEY PROMISED THAT THE TREATIES WOULD LAST FOR AS LONG AS THE GRASS GREW AND THE FISH SWAM.
I FIGURE YOU'RE JUST ABOUT AS TRUSTWORTHY.
AND YOU, CHILD, ARE A THREAT TO ALL WE'VE BUILT.

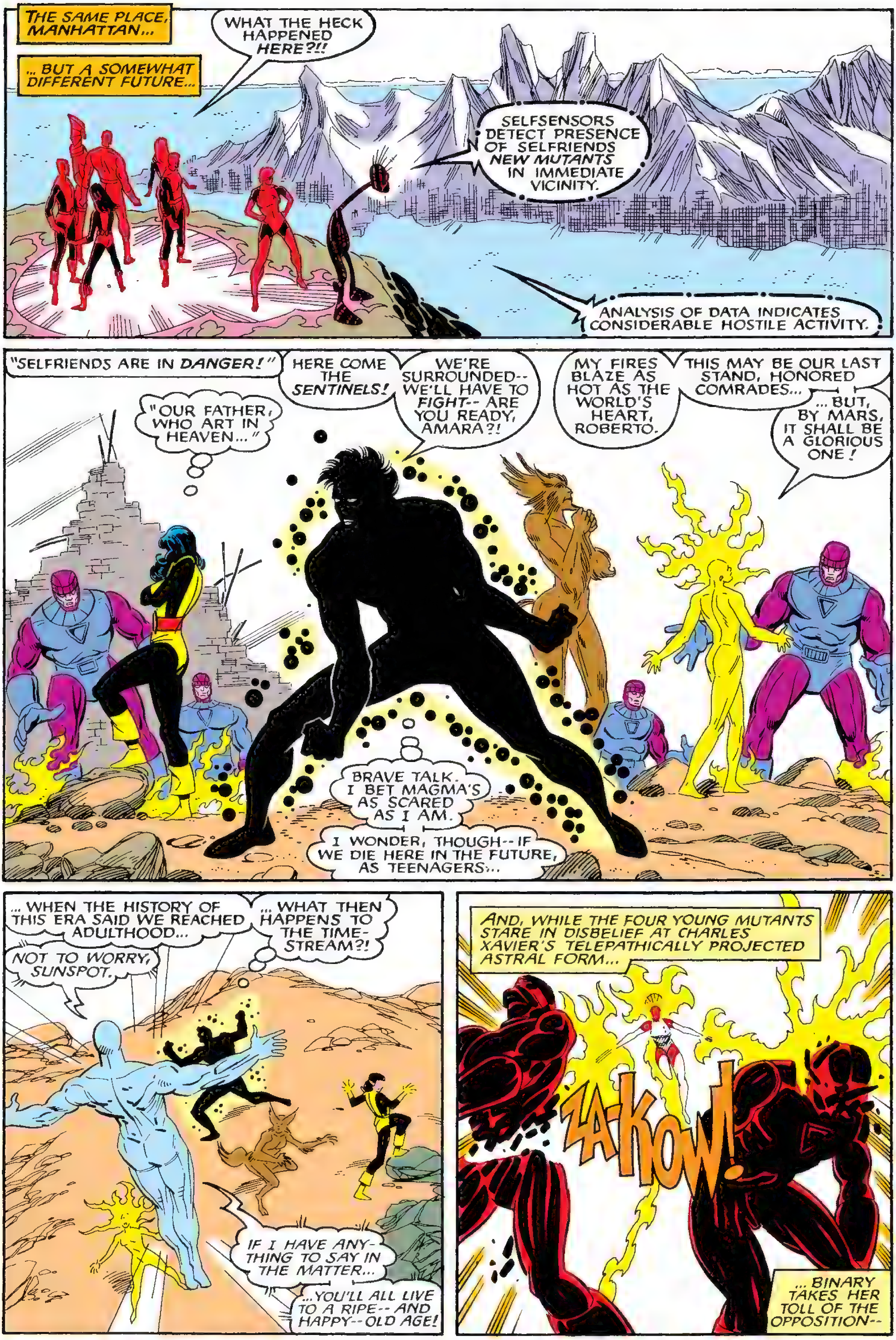

A SOCIETY BUILT ON PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION AIN'T MUCH TO BE PROUD OF, PAL.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO JUDGE, SAM--ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'VE NO IDEA OF WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
YOU'VE SEEN ONLY TINY--OUT OF CONTEXT--BITS AND PIECES OF OUR CITY.

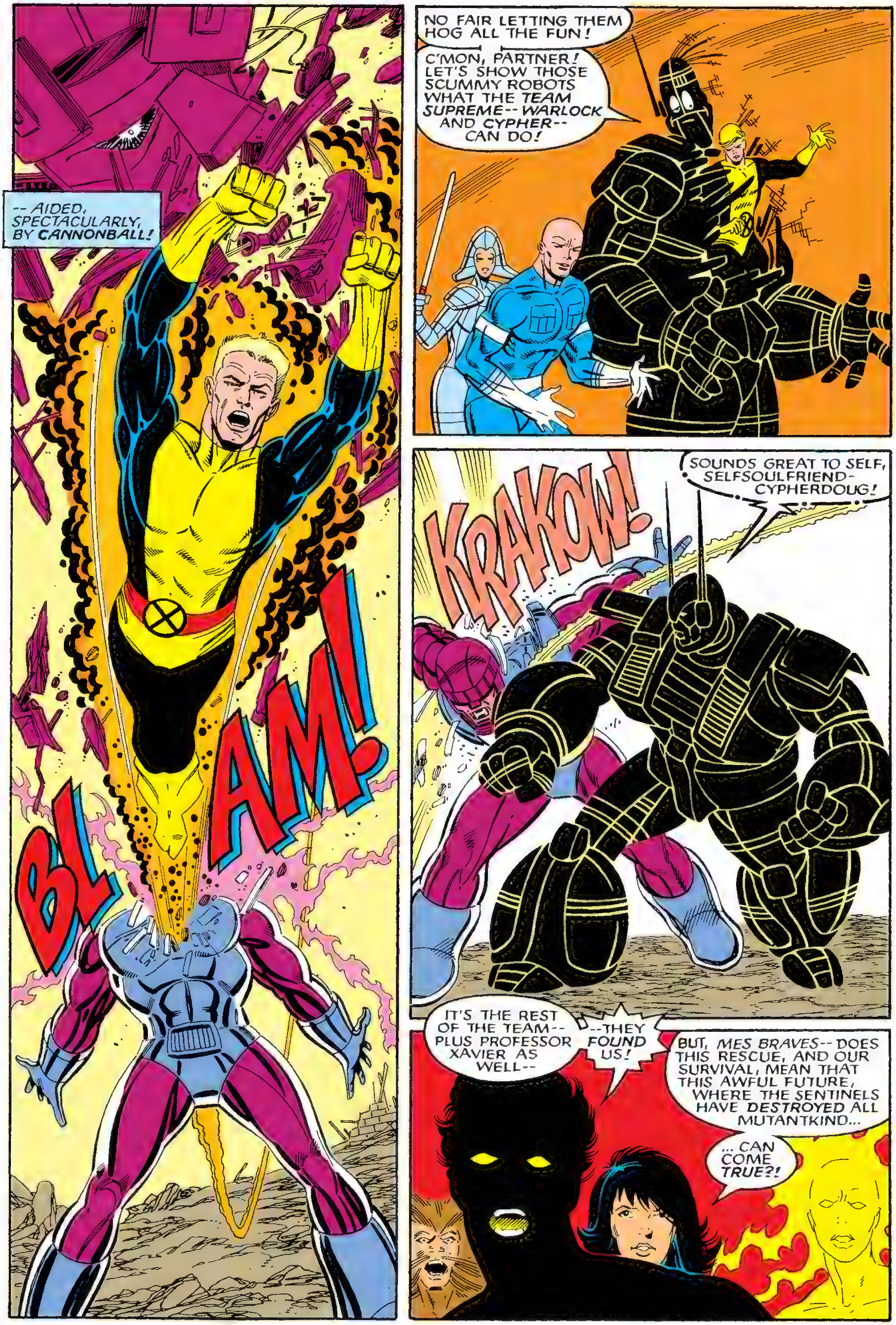

THIS RE-EDUCATION PROCESS WILL SHOW YOU THE WHOLE PICTURE, TEACH YOU WHAT EVERY CHILD HERE LEARNS FROM BIRTH--SO YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ACCEPT US FOR WHAT WE ARE.
YOU'LL FIT IN, YOU'LL BE HAPPY.
WHY NOT LET US MAKE THAT DECISION FOR OURSELVES?!

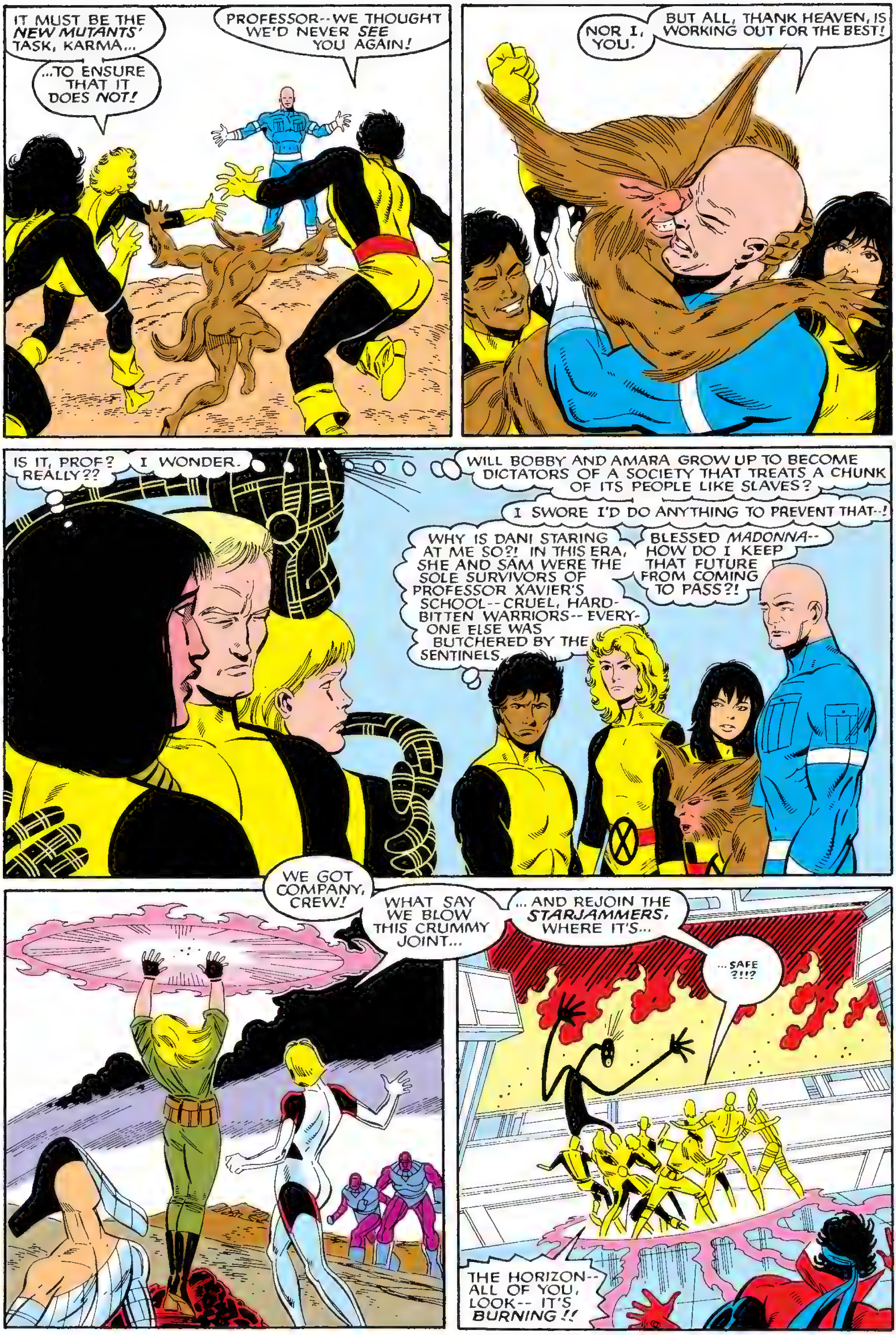

BECAUSE, CYPHER, THE CHOICE IS NOT WHAT'S IMPORTANT--
--ONLY YOUR CONVERSION.
AS SO OFTEN, SO SADLY HAPPENS, THE BEST AND MOST NOBLE OF REASONS...
BY ALL THE LIVING GODS--?!!
PROFESSOR XAVIER!?!
...INSPIRE THE MOST HEINOUS OF ATROCITIES.

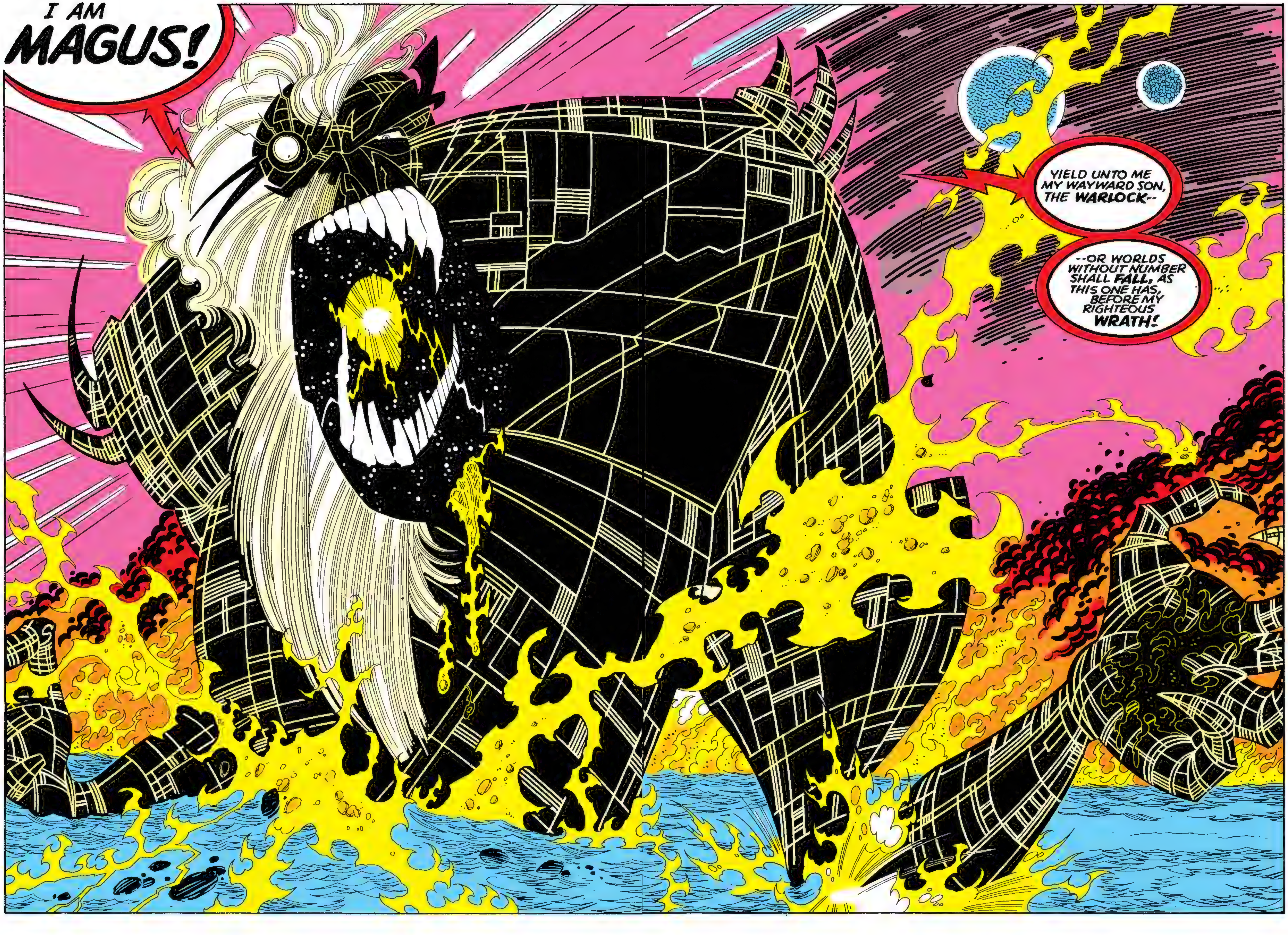

BY YOUR LIGHTS, ROBERTO, THIS MAY BE A NECESSARY ACT. BUT ALL YOUR ELOQUENT RATIONALIZATIONS WILL NOT MAKE IT RIGHT.
I THOUGHT I TAUGHT YOU BETTER.
YOU WERE KILLED, PROFESSOR. MUTANTKIND WAS NEARLY EXTERMINATED! IT'S HARD TO HOLD ONTO A DREAM WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL.
THAT IS WHEN YOU MUST DO SO HARDEST OF ALL.
I THINK WE'VE DONE PRETTY WELL.
I KNOW.

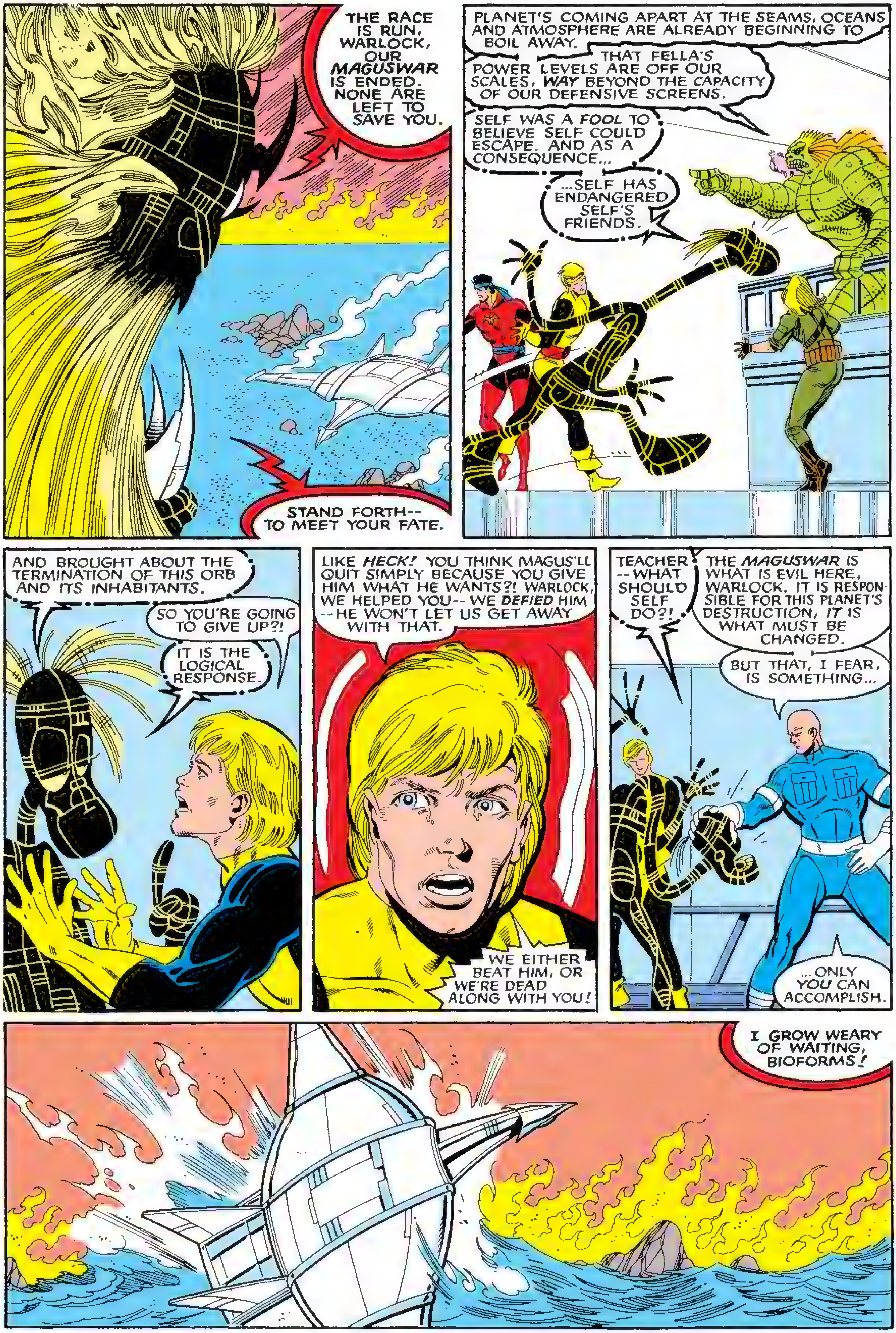

AN HONEST BELIEF, THAT IS CLEAR IN YOUR THOUGHTS.
THEREIN LIES THE TRAGEDY--OF YOUR LIFE...
...AND THIS FUTURE.
FAREWELL.
FTASZSP

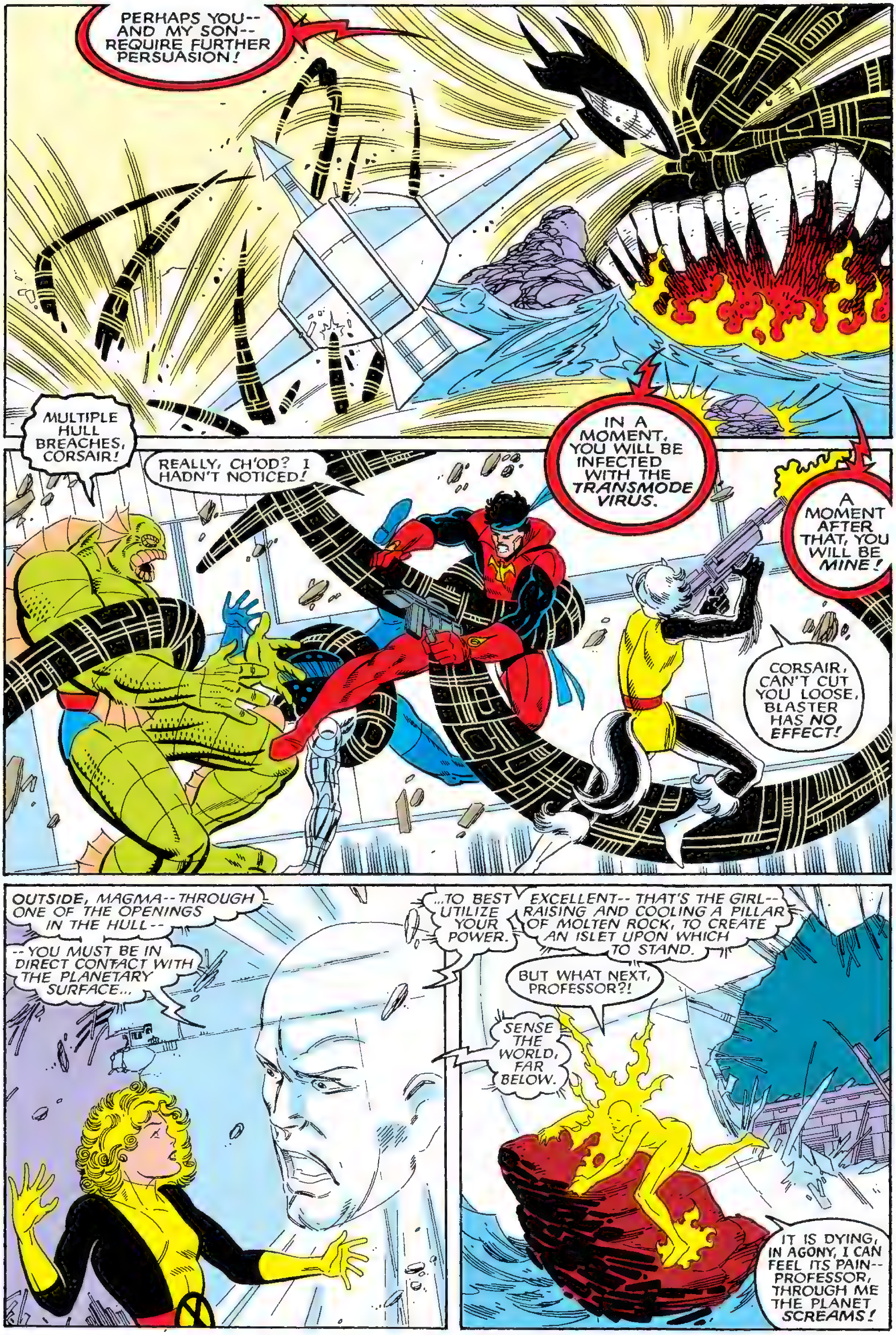

THE SAME PLACE, MANHATTAN...
... BUT A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FUTURE...
WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED HERE?!!
SELFSENSORS DETECT PRESENCE OF SELFRIENDS NEW MUTANTS IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY.
ANALYSIS OF DATA INDICATES CONSIDERABLE HOSTILE ACTIVITY.
"SELFRIENDS ARE IN DANGER!"
HERE COME THE SENTINELS!
WE'RE SURROUNDED-- WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT-- ARE YOU READY, AMARA?!
MY FIRES BLAZE AS HOT AS THE WORLD'S HEART, ROBERTO.
THIS MAY BE OUR LAST STAND, HONORED COMRADES...
... BUT, BY MARS, IT SHALL BE A GLORIOUS ONE!
"OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN..."
BRAVE TALK. I BET MAGMA'S AS SCARED AS I AM.
I WONDER, THOUGH-- IF WE DIE HERE IN THE FUTURE, AS TEENAGERS...
... WHEN THE HISTORY OF THIS ERA SAID WE REACHED ADULTHOOD...
... WHAT THEN HAPPENS TO THE TIME-STREAM?!
NOT TO WORRY, SUNSPOT.
IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY IN THE MATTER...
...YOU'LL ALL LIVE TO A RIPE-- AND HAPPY--OLD AGE!
AND, WHILE THE FOUR YOUNG MUTANTS STARE IN DISBELIEF AT CHARLES XAVIER'S TELEPATHICALLY PROJECTED ASTRAL FORM...
ZA-KOW!
... BINARY TAKES HER TOLL OF THE OPPOSITION--

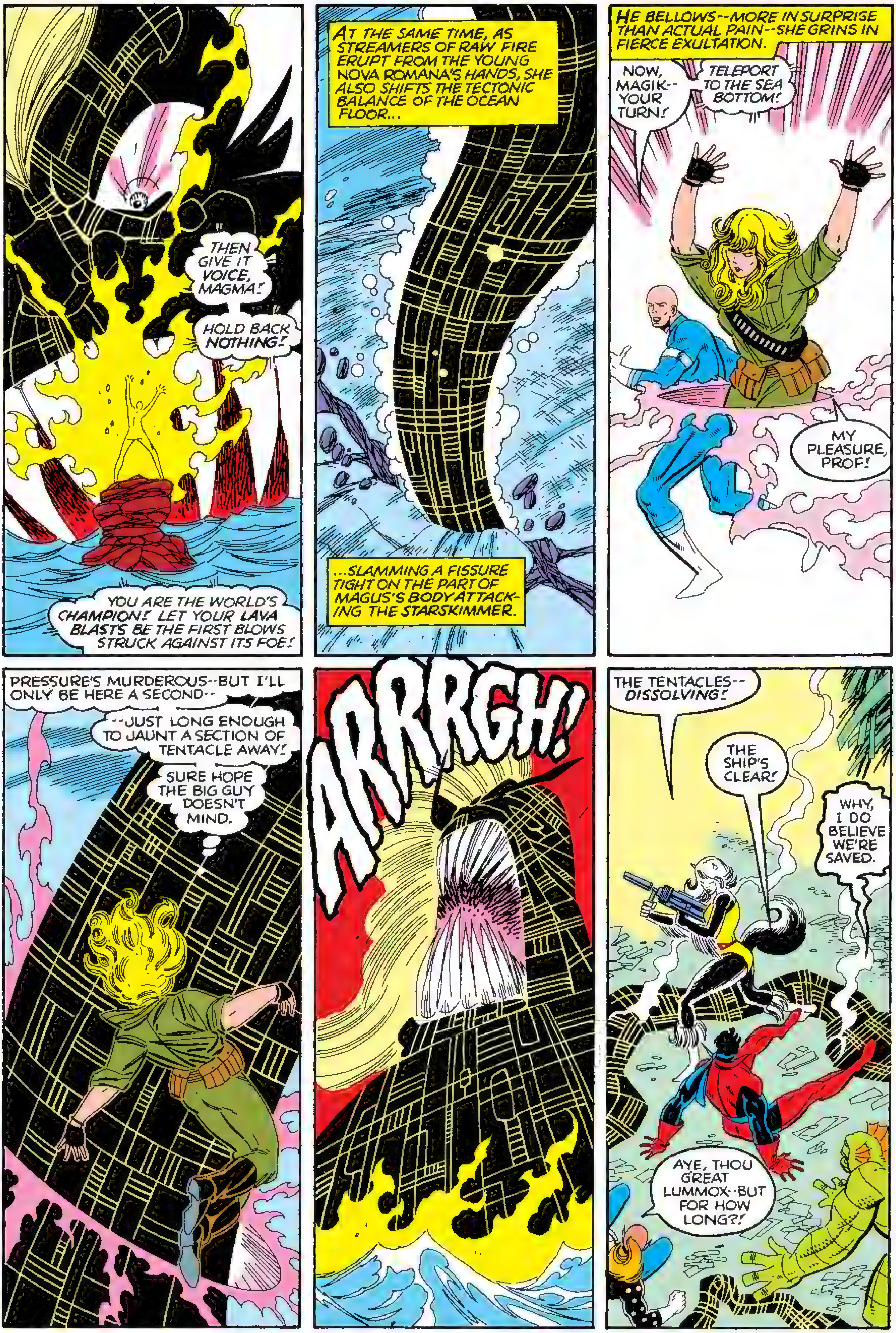

-- AIDED, SPECTACULARLY, BY CANNONBALL!
BLAM!
NO FAIR LETTING THEM HOG ALL THE FUN!
C'MON, PARTNER! LET'S SHOW THOSE SCUMMY ROBOTS WHAT THE TEAM SUPREME -- WARLOCK AND CYPHER -- CAN DO!
KRAKOW!
SOUNDS GREAT TO SELF, SELFSOULFRIEND-CYPHERDOUG!
IT'S THE REST OF THE TEAM -- PLUS PROFESSOR XAVIER AS WELL --
-- THEY FOUND US!
BUT, MES BRAVES -- DOES THIS RESCUE, AND OUR SURVIVAL, MEAN THAT THIS AWFUL FUTURE, WHERE THE SENTINELS HAVE DESTROYED ALL MUTANTKIND...
... CAN COME TRUE?!

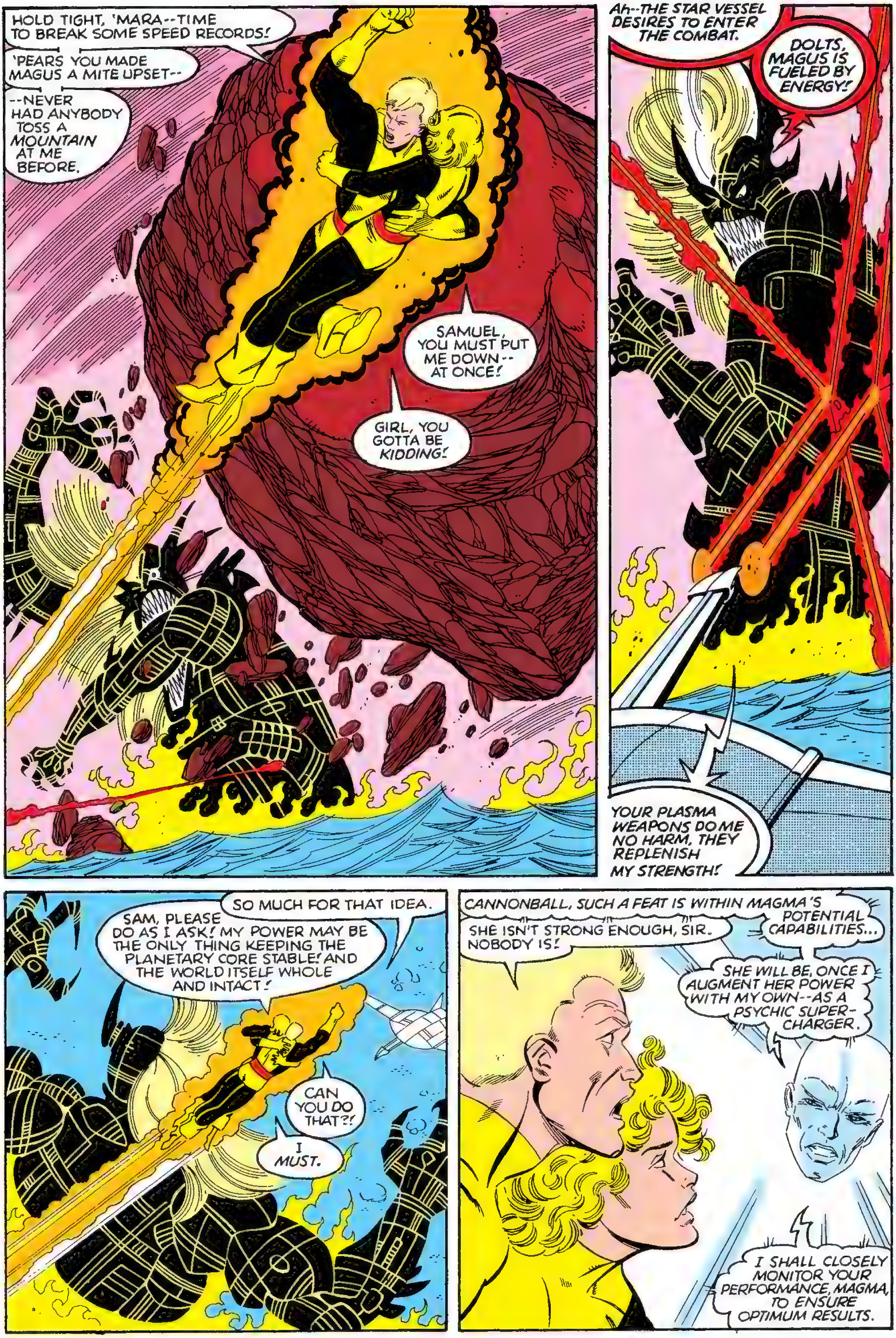

IT MUST BE THE *NEW MUTANTS'* TASK, KARMA...
...TO ENSURE THAT IT DOES *NOT!*
PROFESSOR--WE THOUGHT WE'D NEVER *SEE* YOU AGAIN!
NOR I, YOU.
BUT ALL, THANK HEAVEN, IS WORKING OUT FOR THE BEST!
IS IT, PROF? REALLY??
I WONDER.
WILL BOBBY AND AMARA GROW UP TO BECOME DICTATORS OF A SOCIETY THAT TREATS A CHUNK OF ITS PEOPLE LIKE SLAVES?
I SWORE I'D DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT THAT--!
WHY IS DANI STARING AT ME SO?! IN THIS ERA, SHE AND SAM WERE THE SOLE SURVIVORS OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL--CRUEL, HARD-BITTEN WARRIORS--EVERYONE ELSE WAS BUTCHERED BY THE SENTINELS.
BLESSED *MADONNA*--HOW DO I KEEP THAT FUTURE FROM COMING TO PASS?!
WE GOT COMPANY, CREW!
WHAT SAY WE BLOW THIS CRUMMY JOINT...
...AND REJOIN THE *STARJAMMERS,* WHERE IT'S...
...SAFE ?!!?
THE HORIZON--ALL OF YOU, LOOK--IT'S *BURNING!!*

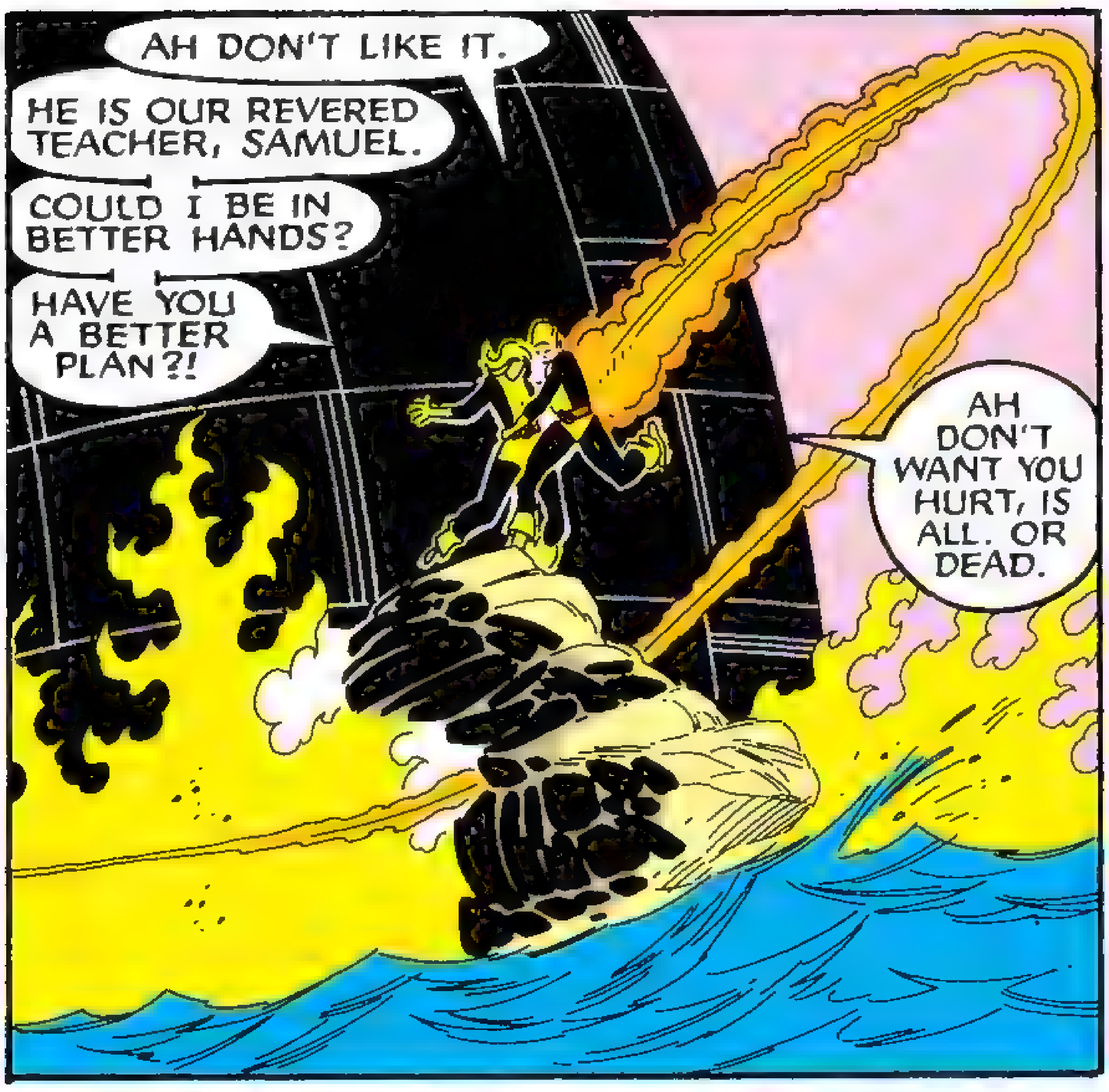

I AM MAGUS!
YIELD UNTO ME MY WAYWARD SON, THE WARLOCK--
--OR WORLDS WITHOUT NUMBER SHALL FALL, AS THIS ONE HAS, BEFORE MY RIGHTEOUS WRATH!

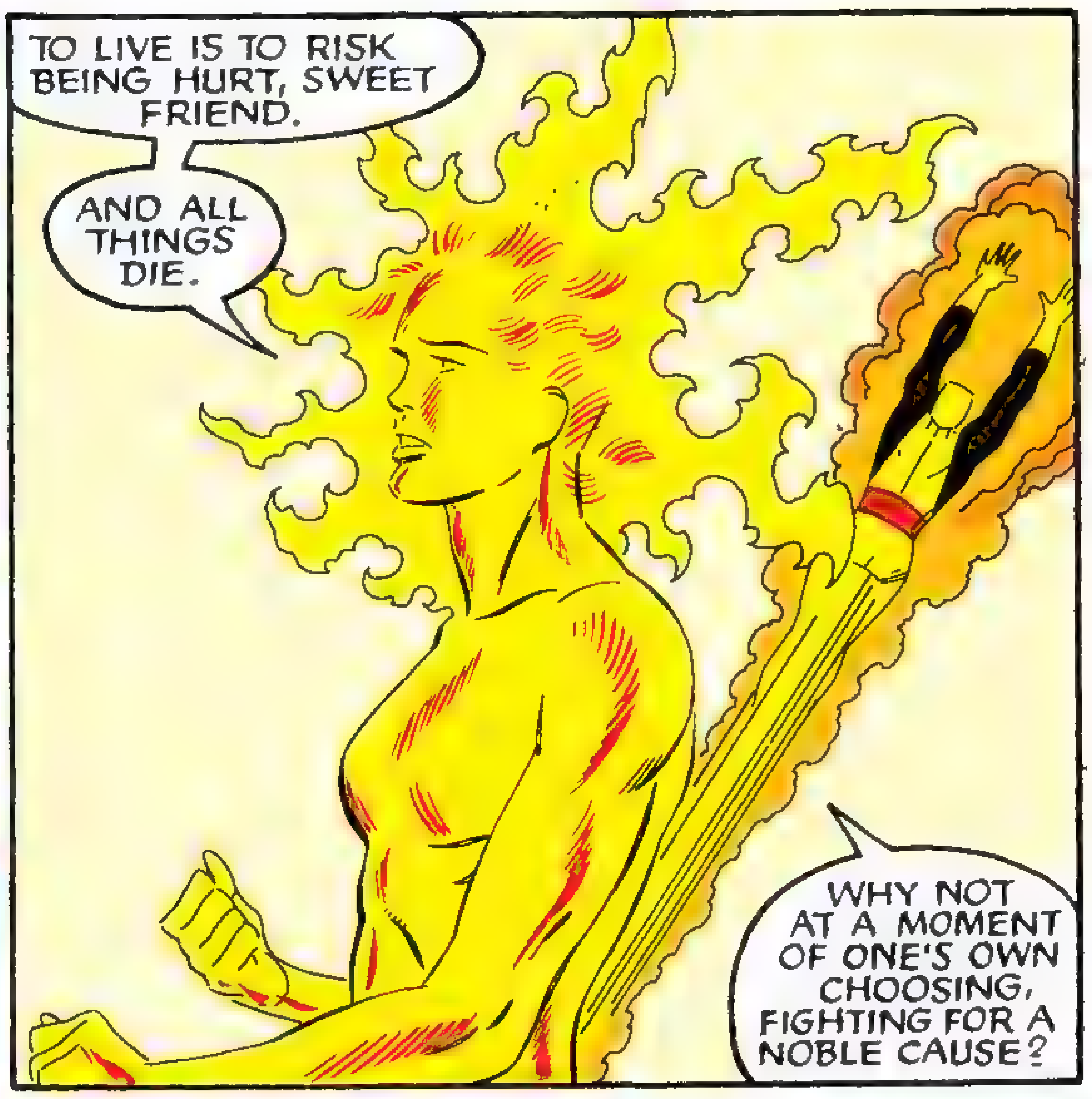

THE RACE IS RUN, WARLOCK, OUR *MAGUSWAR* IS ENDED. NONE ARE LEFT TO SAVE YOU.
STAND FORTH-- TO MEET YOUR FATE.
PLANET'S COMING APART AT THE SEAMS, OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO BOIL AWAY.
THAT FELLA'S POWER LEVELS ARE OFF OUR SCALES, *WAY* BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF OUR DEFENSIVE SCREENS.
SELF WAS A *FOOL* TO BELIEVE SELF COULD ESCAPE, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE...
...SELF HAS ENDANGERED SELF'S FRIENDS.
AND BROUGHT ABOUT THE TERMINATION OF THIS ORB AND ITS INHABITANTS.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE UP?!
IT IS THE LOGICAL RESPONSE.
LIKE *HECK!* YOU THINK MAGUS'LL QUIT SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS?! WARLOCK, WE HELPED YOU-- WE *DEFIED* HIM --HE WON'T LET US GET AWAY WITH THAT.
WE EITHER BEAT HIM, OR WE'RE DEAD ALONG WITH YOU!
TEACHER --WHAT SHOULD SELF DO?!
THE *MAGUSWAR* IS WHAT IS EVIL HERE, WARLOCK. IT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PLANET'S DESTRUCTION, *IT* IS WHAT MUST BE CHANGED.
BUT THAT, I FEAR, IS SOMETHING...
...ONLY *YOU* CAN ACCOMPLISH.
I GROW WEARY OF WAITING, BIOFORMS!

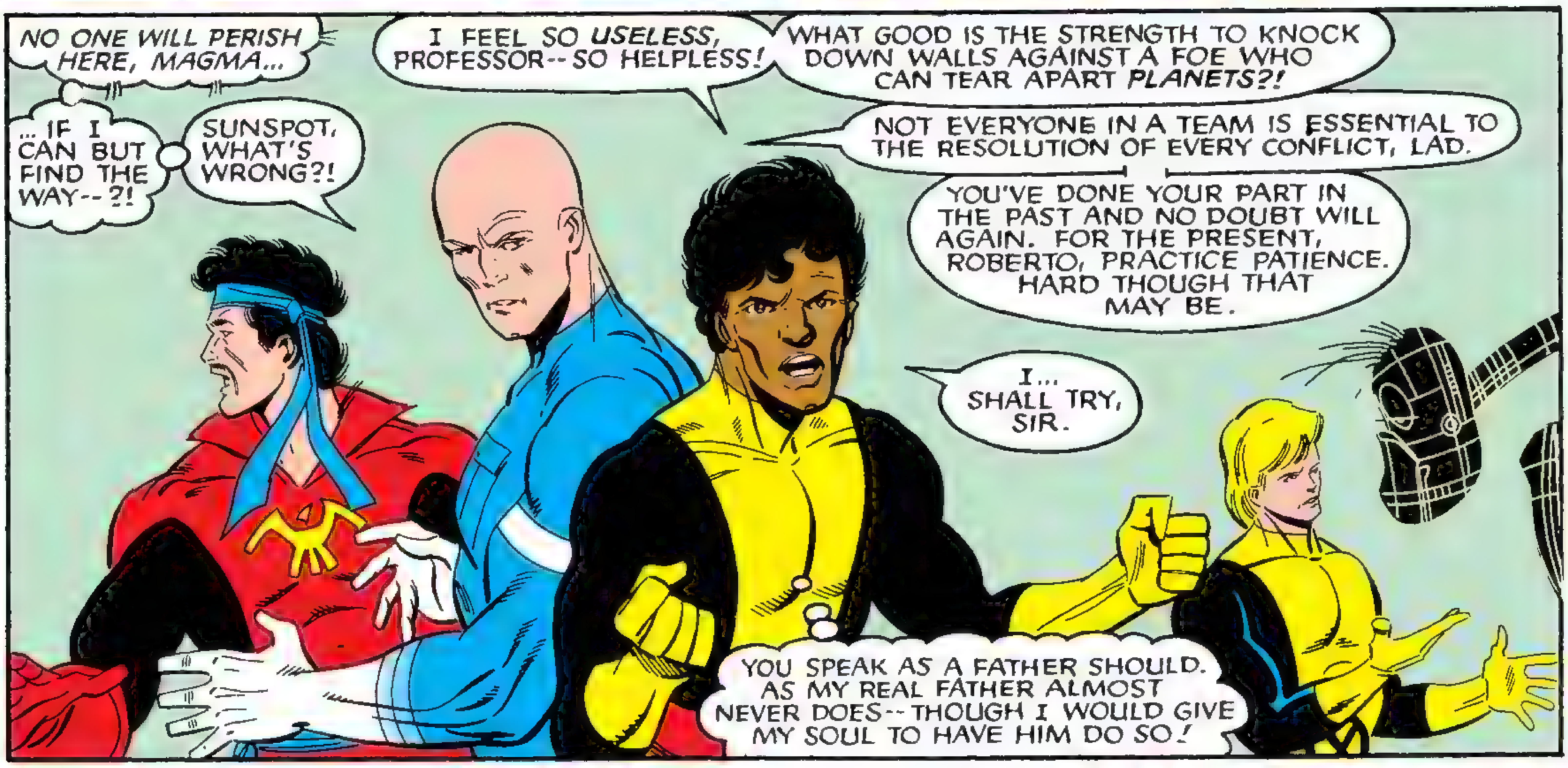

PERHAPS YOU-- AND MY SON-- REQUIRE FURTHER PERSUASION!
MULTIPLE HULL BREACHES, CORSAIR!
REALLY, CH'OD? I HADN'T NOTICED!
IN A MOMENT, YOU WILL BE INFECTED WITH THE *TRANSMODE VIRUS*.
A MOMENT AFTER THAT, YOU WILL BE *MINE!*
CORSAIR, CAN'T CUT YOU LOOSE. BLASTER HAS *NO EFFECT!*
OUTSIDE, MAGMA--THROUGH ONE OF THE OPENINGS IN THE HULL--
--YOU MUST BE IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PLANETARY SURFACE...
...TO BEST UTILIZE YOUR POWER.
EXCELLENT-- THAT'S THE GIRL-- RAISING AND COOLING A PILLAR OF MOLTEN ROCK, TO CREATE AN ISLET UPON WHICH TO STAND.
BUT WHAT NEXT, PROFESSOR?!
SENSE THE WORLD, FAR BELOW.
IT IS DYING, IN AGONY, I CAN FEEL ITS PAIN-- PROFESSOR, THROUGH ME THE PLANET *SCREAMS!*

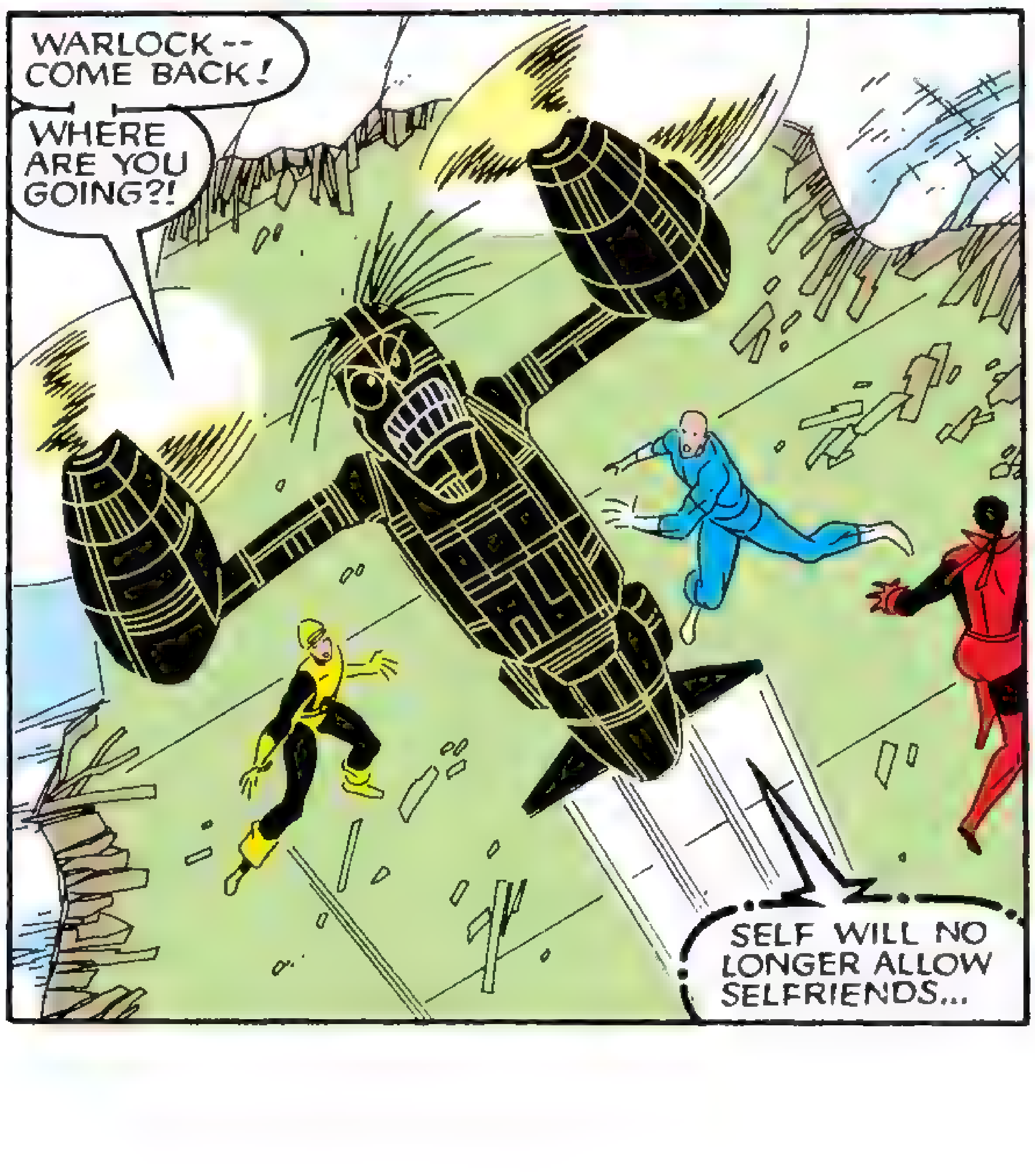

THEN GIVE IT VOICE, MAGMA!
HOLD BACK NOTHING!
YOU ARE THE WORLD'S CHAMPION! LET YOUR LAVA BLASTS BE THE FIRST BLOWS STRUCK AGAINST ITS FOE!
AT THE SAME TIME, AS STREAMERS OF RAW FIRE ERUPT FROM THE YOUNG NOVA ROMANA'S HANDS, SHE ALSO SHIFTS THE TECTONIC BALANCE OF THE OCEAN FLOOR...
...SLAMMING A FISSURE TIGHT ON THE PART OF MAGUS'S BODY ATTACKING THE STARSKIMMER.
HE BELLOWS--MORE IN SURPRISE THAN ACTUAL PAIN--SHE GRINS IN FIERCE EXULTATION.
NOW, MAGIK--YOUR TURN!
TELEPORT TO THE SEA BOTTOM!
MY PLEASURE, PROF!
PRESSURE'S MURDEROUS--BUT I'LL ONLY BE HERE A SECOND--
--JUST LONG ENOUGH TO JAUNT A SECTION OF TENTACLE AWAY!
SURE HOPE THE BIG GUY DOESN'T MIND.
ARRRGH!
THE TENTACLES--DISSOLVING!
THE SHIP'S CLEAR!
WHY, I DO BELIEVE WE'RE SAVED.
AYE, THOU GREAT LUMMOX--BUT FOR HOW LONG?!

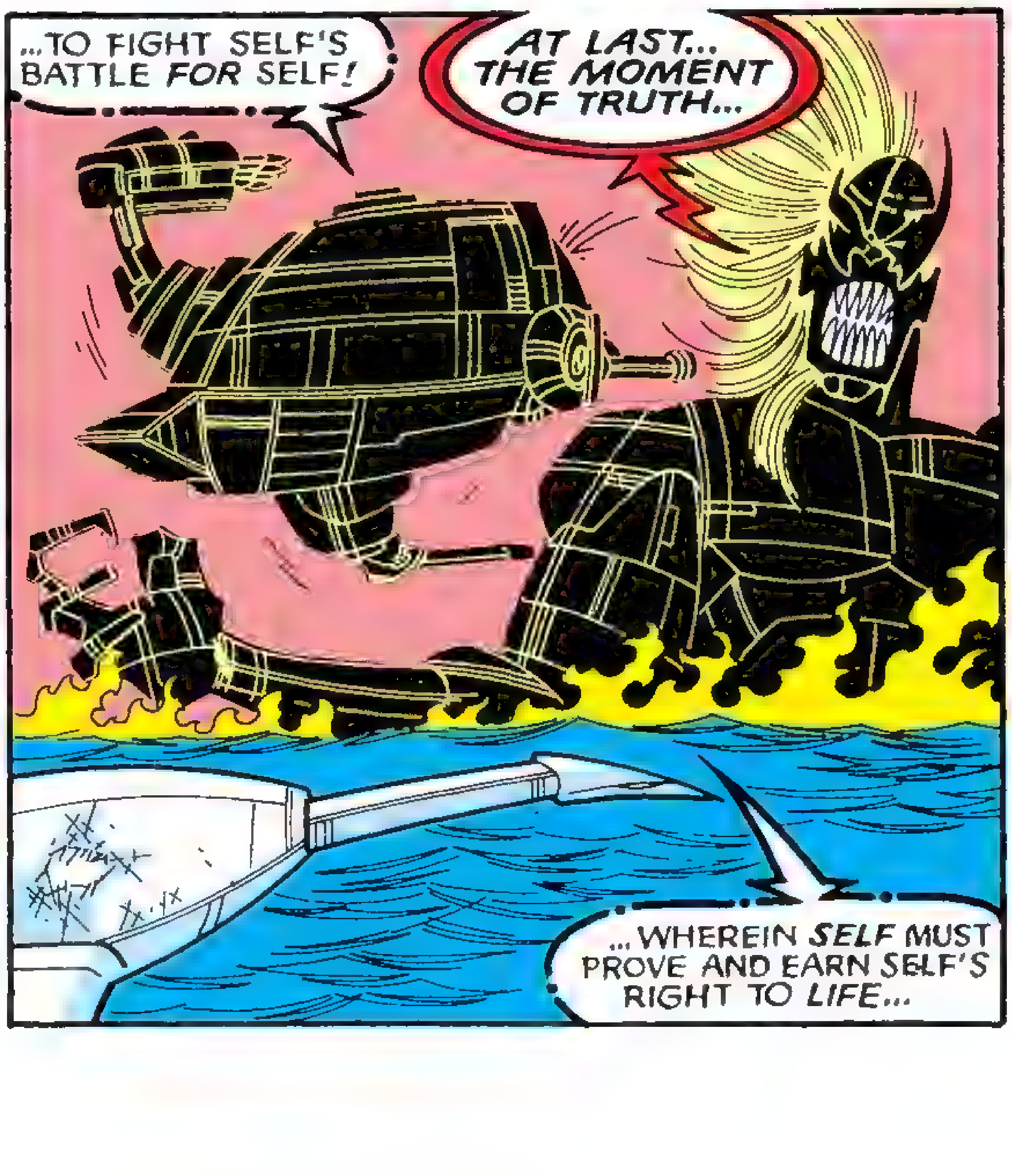

HOLD TIGHT, 'MARA--TIME TO BREAK SOME SPEED RECORDS!
'PEARS YOU MADE MAGUS A MITE UPSET--
--NEVER HAD ANYBODY TOSS A *MOUNTAIN* AT ME BEFORE.
SAMUEL, YOU MUST PUT ME DOWN--AT ONCE!
GIRL, YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDING!*
Ah--THE STAR VESSEL DESIRES TO ENTER THE COMBAT.
DOLTS, MAGUS IS FUELED BY ENERGY!
YOUR PLASMA WEAPONS DO ME NO HARM, THEY REPLENISH MY STRENGTH!
SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.
SAM, PLEASE DO AS I ASK! MY POWER MAY BE THE ONLY THING KEEPING THE PLANETARY CORE STABLE! AND THE WORLD ITSELF WHOLE AND INTACT!
CAN YOU *DO* THAT?!
I *MUST.*
CANNONBALL, SUCH A FEAT IS WITHIN MAGMA'S POTENTIAL CAPABILITIES...
SHE ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH, SIR. NOBODY IS!
SHE WILL BE, ONCE I AUGMENT HER POWER WITH MY OWN--AS A PSYCHIC SUPER-CHARGER.
I SHALL CLOSELY MONITOR YOUR PERFORMANCE, MAGMA, TO ENSURE OPTIMUM RESULTS.

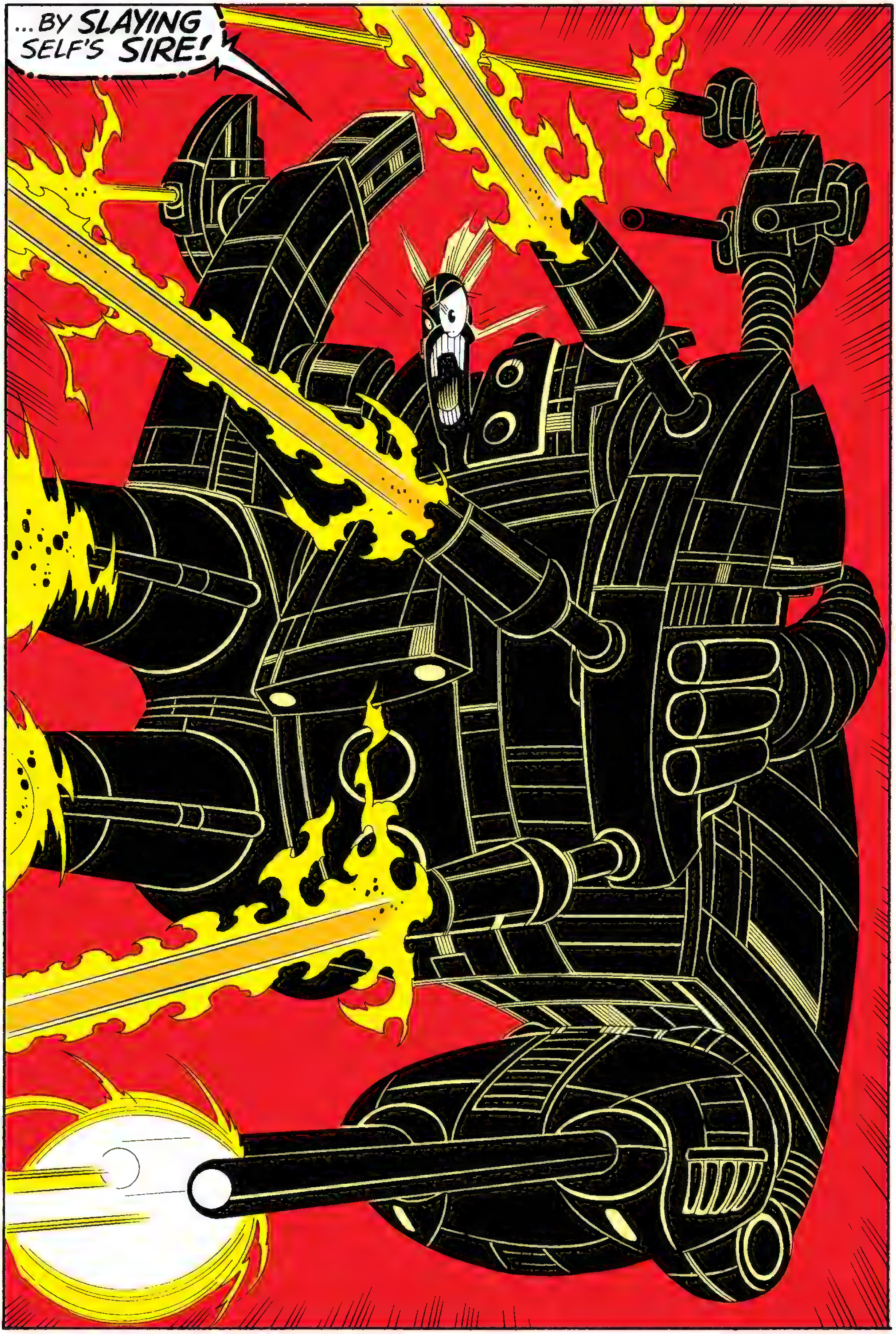

AH DON'T LIKE IT.
HE IS OUR REVERED TEACHER, SAMUEL.
COULD I BE IN BETTER HANDS?
HAVE YOU A BETTER PLAN?!
AH DON'T WANT YOU HURT, IS ALL. OR DEAD.

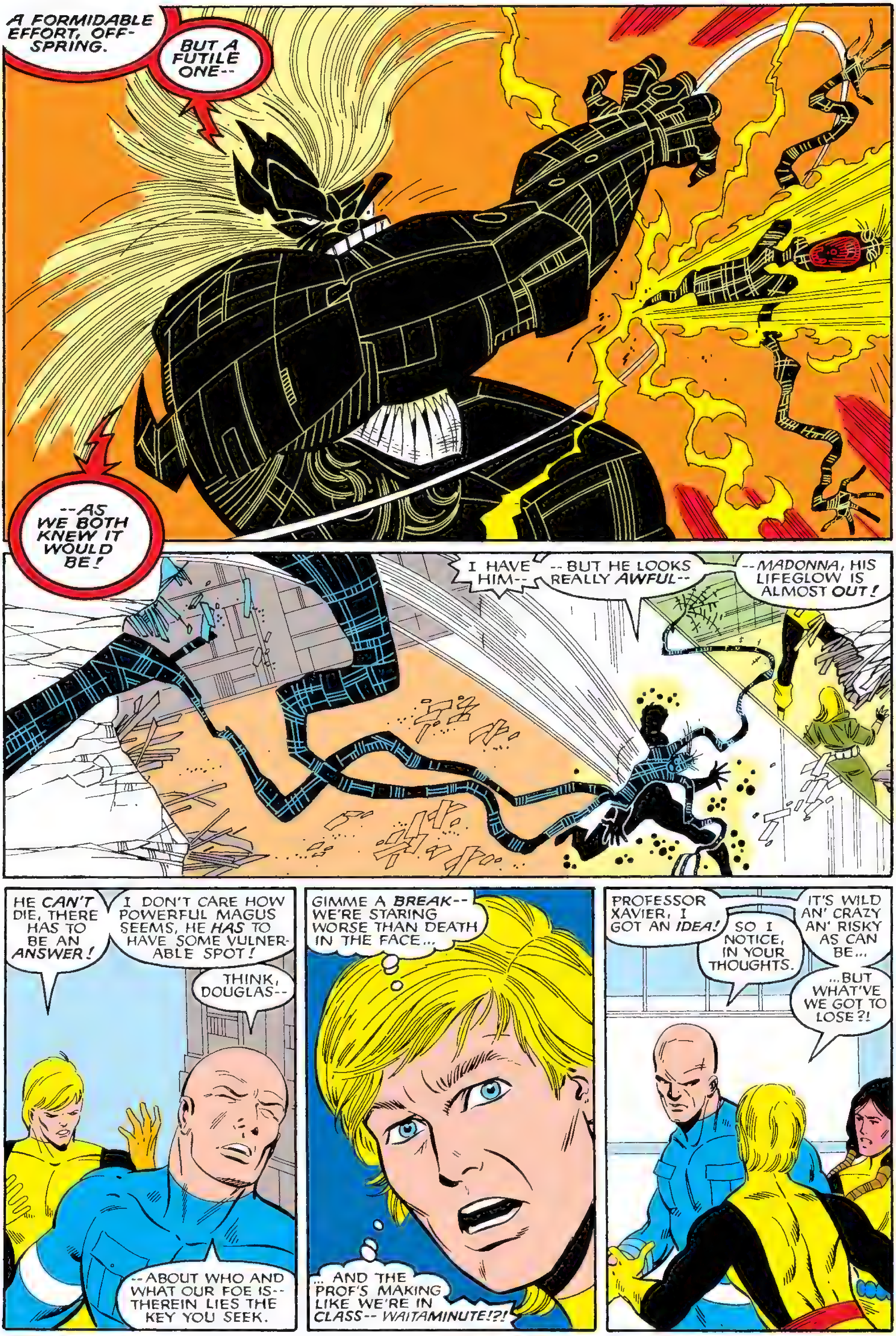

TO LIVE IS TO RISK BEING HURT, SWEET FRIEND.
AND ALL THINGS DIE.
WHY NOT AT A MOMENT OF ONE'S OWN CHOOSING, FIGHTING FOR A NOBLE CAUSE?

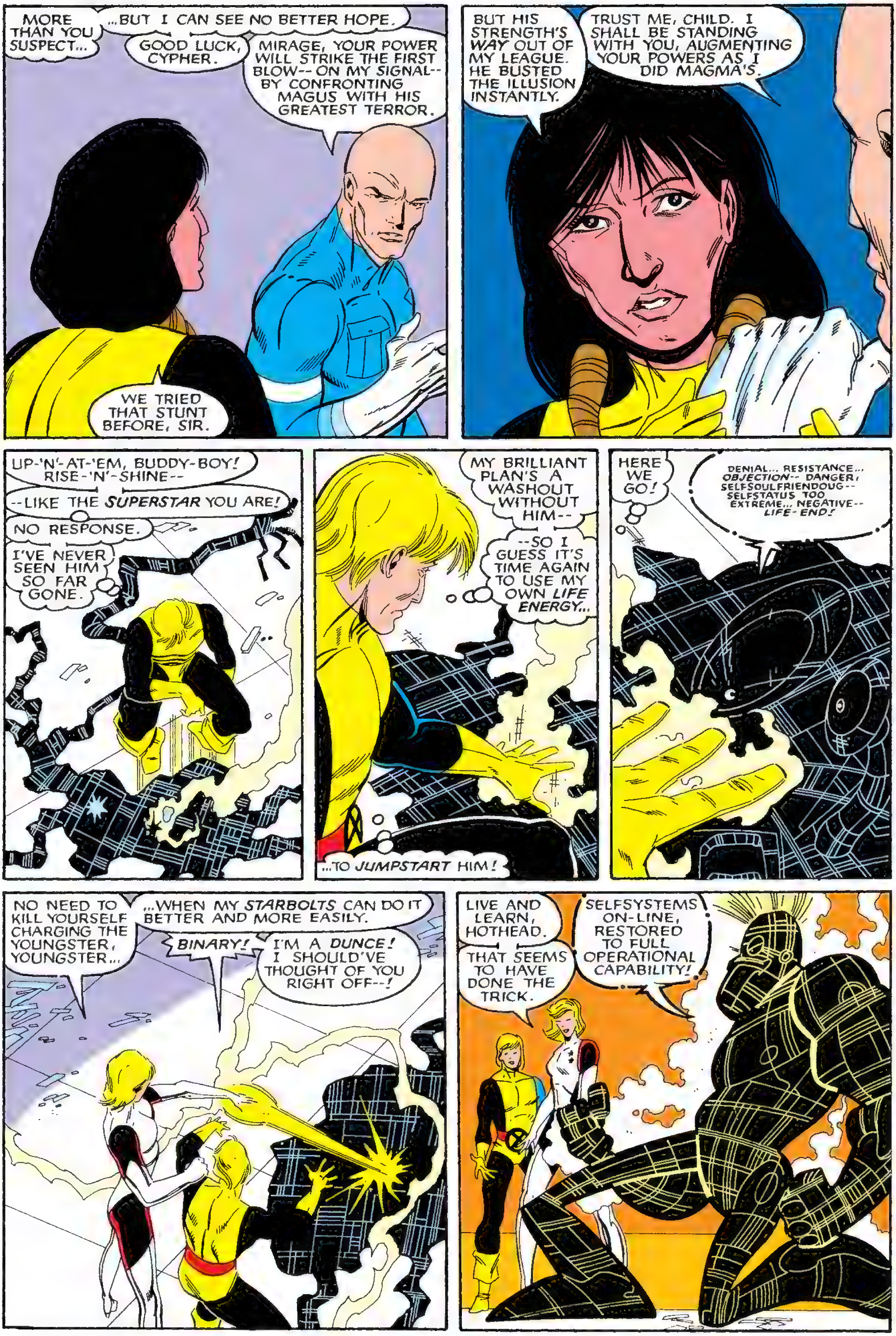

NO ONE WILL PERISH HERE, MAGMA...
...IF I CAN BUT FIND THE WAY--?!
SUNSPOT, WHAT'S WRONG?!
I FEEL SO USELESS, PROFESSOR--SO HELPLESS!
WHAT GOOD IS THE STRENGTH TO KNOCK DOWN WALLS AGAINST A FOE WHO CAN TEAR APART PLANETS?!
NOT EVERYONE IN A TEAM IS ESSENTIAL TO THE RESOLUTION OF EVERY CONFLICT, LAD.
YOU'VE DONE YOUR PART IN THE PAST AND NO DOUBT WILL AGAIN. FOR THE PRESENT, ROBERTO, PRACTICE PATIENCE. HARD THOUGH THAT MAY BE.
I... SHALL TRY, SIR.
YOU SPEAK AS A FATHER SHOULD. AS MY REAL FATHER ALMOST NEVER DOES--THOUGH I WOULD GIVE MY SOUL TO HAVE HIM DO SO!

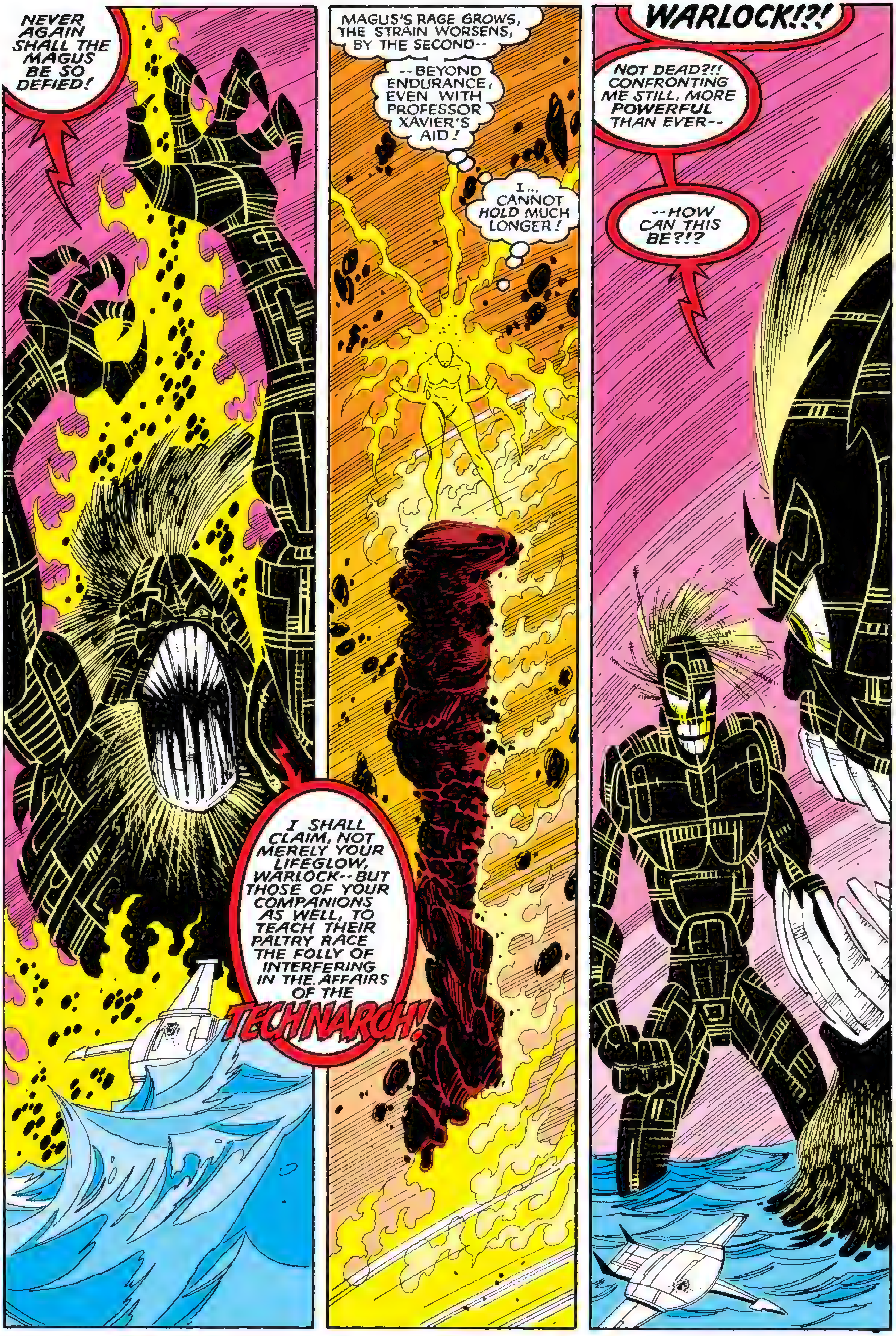

WARLOCK--COME BACK!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
SELF WILL NO LONGER ALLOW SELFRIENDS...

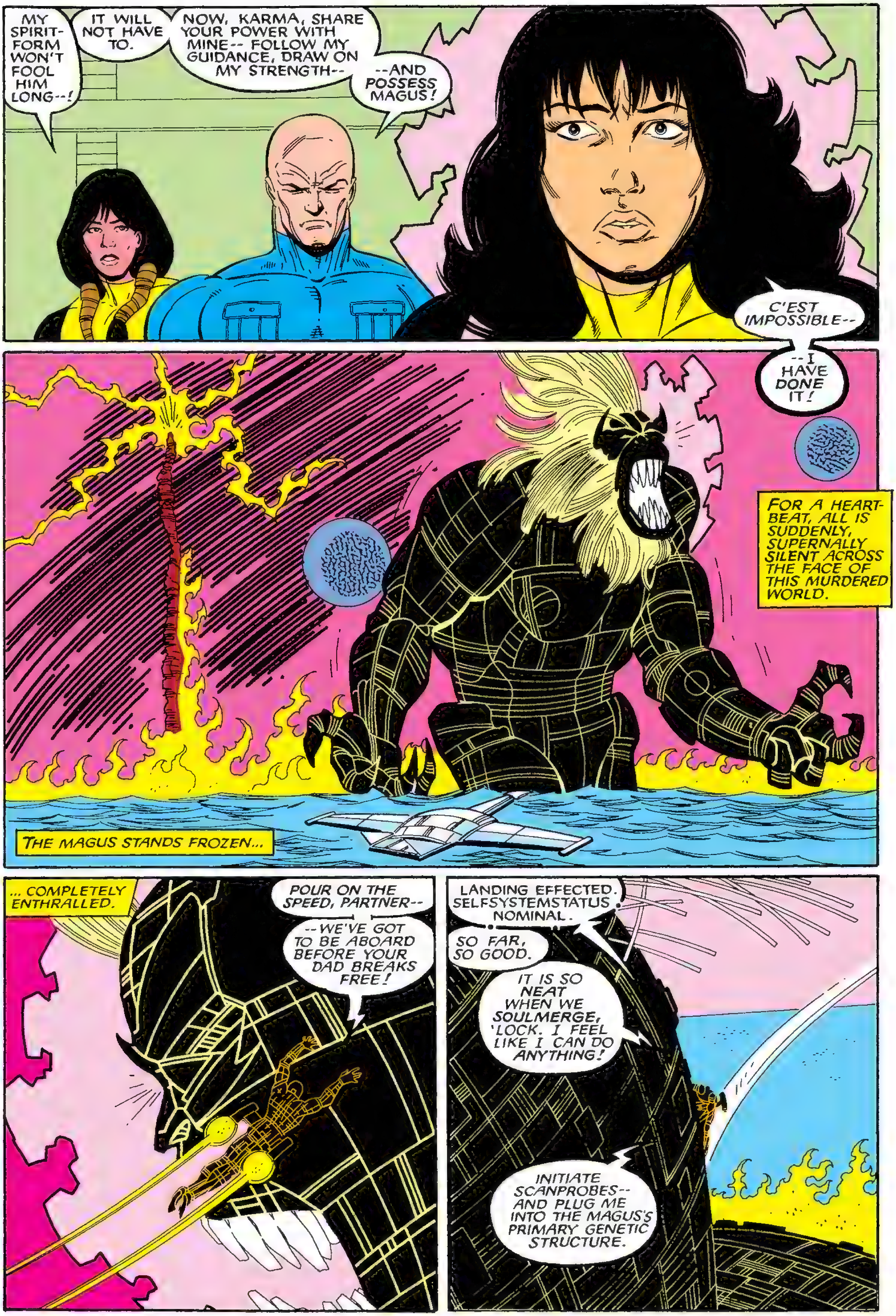

...TO FIGHT SELF'S BATTLE FOR SELF!
AT LAST... THE MOMENT OF TRUTH...
...WHEREIN SELF MUST PROVE AND EARN SELF'S RIGHT TO LIFE...

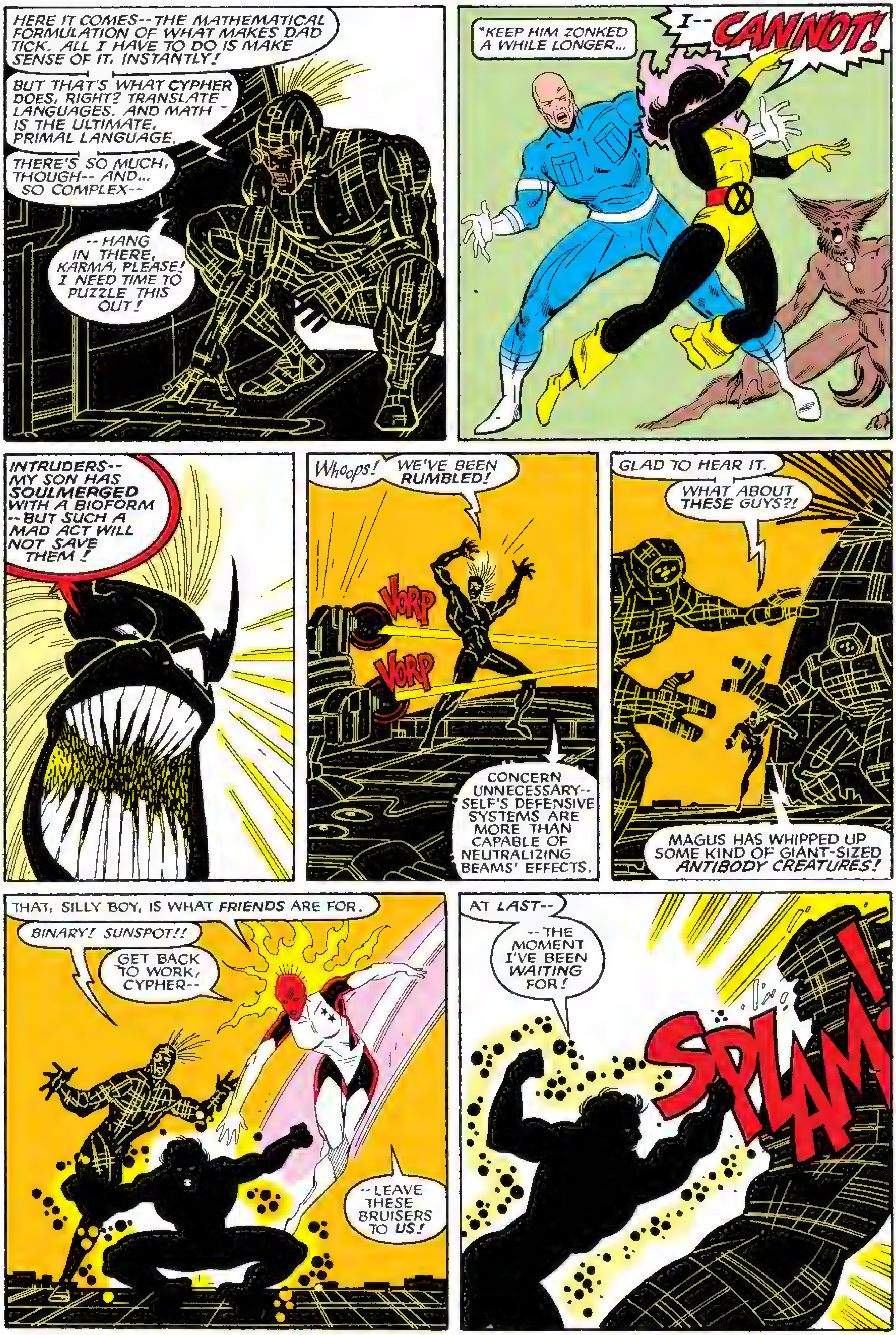

...BY SLAYING SELF'S SIRE!

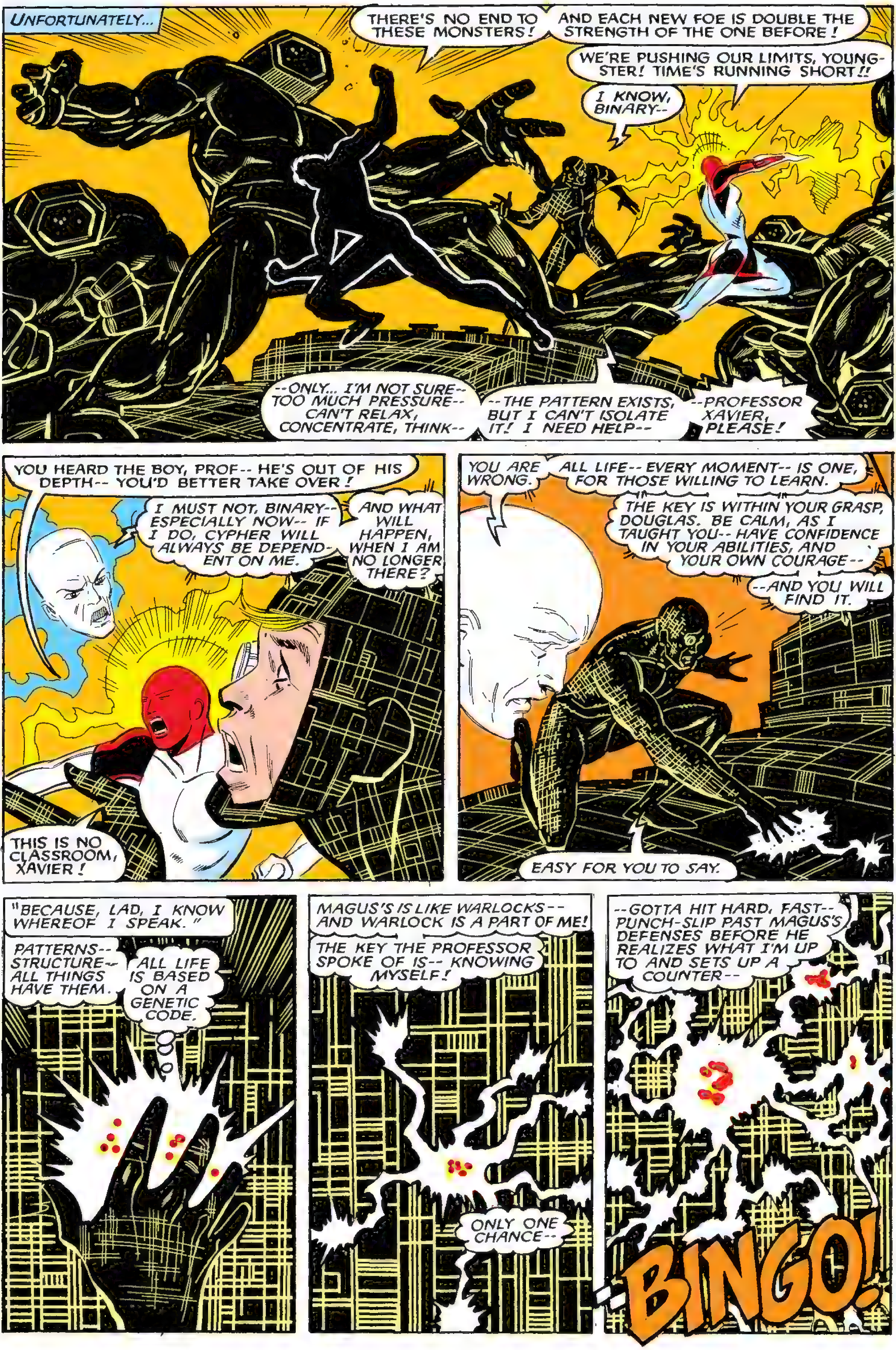

A FORMIDABLE EFFORT, OFF-SPRING.
BUT A FUTILE ONE--
--AS WE BOTH KNEW IT WOULD BE!
I HAVE HIM--
--BUT HE LOOKS REALLY *AWFUL*--
--*MADONNA*, HIS LIFEGLOW IS ALMOST *OUT*!
HE *CAN'T* DIE, THERE HAS TO BE AN *ANSWER*!
I DON'T CARE HOW POWERFUL MAGUS SEEMS, HE *HAS* TO HAVE SOME VULNERABLE SPOT!
THINK, DOUGLAS--
--ABOUT WHO AND WHAT OUR FOE IS--THEREIN LIES THE KEY YOU SEEK.
GIMME A *BREAK*--WE'RE STARING WORSE THAN DEATH IN THE FACE...
... AND THE PROF'S MAKING LIKE WE'RE IN *CLASS*-- *WAITAMINUTE!?!*
PROFESSOR XAVIER, I GOT AN *IDEA!*
SO I NOTICE, IN YOUR THOUGHTS.
IT'S WILD AN' CRAZY AN' RISKY AS CAN BE...
...BUT WHAT'VE WE GOT TO LOSE?!

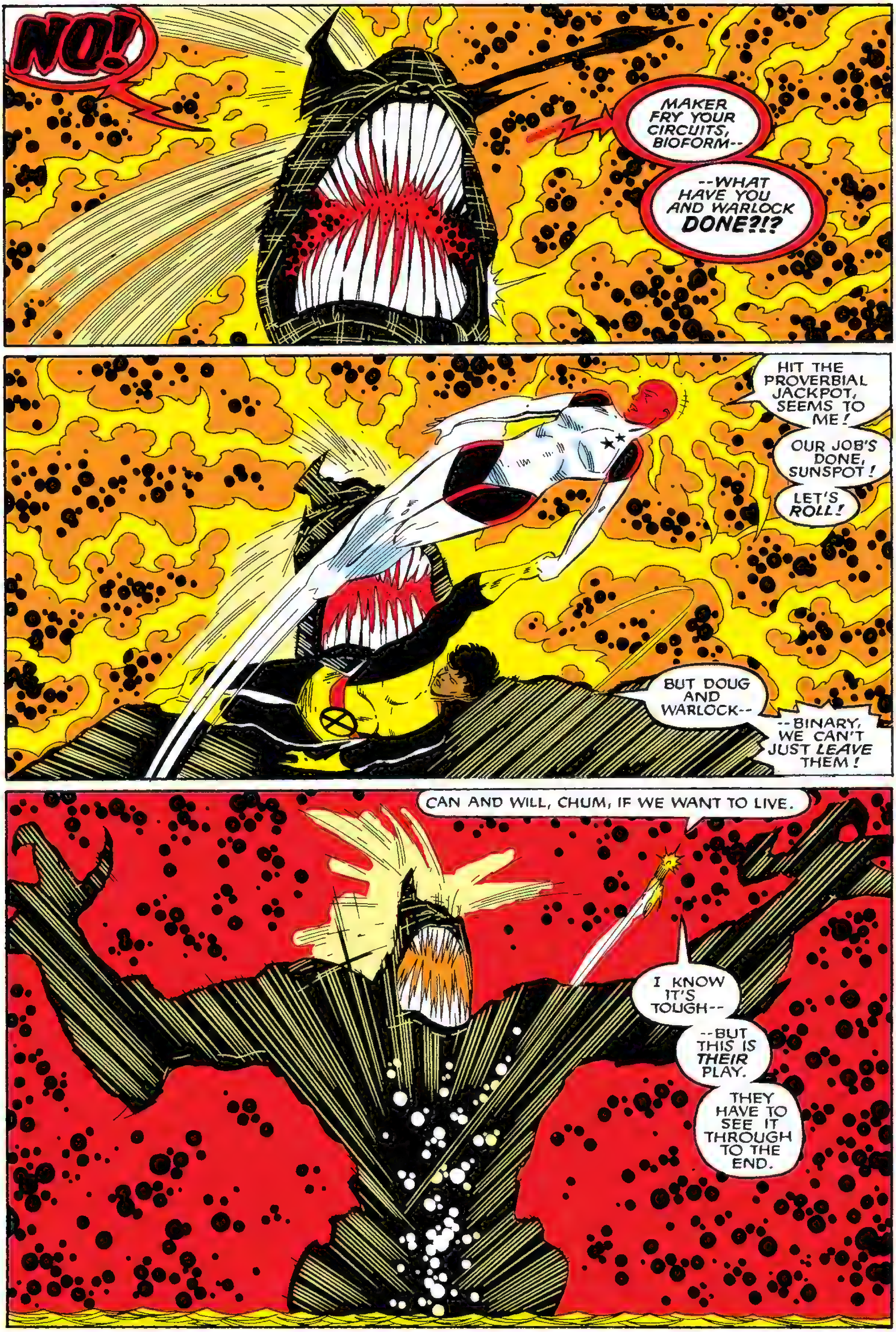

MORE THAN YOU SUSPECT...
...BUT I CAN SEE NO BETTER HOPE.
GOOD LUCK, CYPHER.
MIRAGE, YOUR POWER WILL STRIKE THE FIRST BLOW-- ON MY SIGNAL-- BY CONFRONTING MAGUS WITH HIS GREATEST TERROR.
WE TRIED THAT STUNT BEFORE, SIR.
BUT HIS STRENGTH'S *WAY* OUT OF MY LEAGUE. HE BUSTED THE ILLUSION INSTANTLY.
TRUST ME, CHILD. I SHALL BE STANDING WITH YOU, AUGMENTING YOUR POWERS AS I DID MAGMA'S.
UP-'N'-AT-'EM, BUDDY-BOY! RISE-'N'-SHINE--
--LIKE THE *SUPERSTAR* YOU ARE!
NO RESPONSE.
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM SO FAR GONE.
MY BRILLIANT PLAN'S A WASHOUT WITHOUT HIM--
--SO I GUESS IT'S TIME AGAIN TO USE MY OWN *LIFE ENERGY*...
...TO *JUMPSTART* HIM!
HERE WE GO!
DENIAL... RESISTANCE... *OBJECTION*-- DANGER, SELFSOULFRIENDOUG-- SELFSTATUS TOO EXTREME... NEGATIVE-- *LIFE-END!*
NO NEED TO KILL YOURSELF CHARGING THE YOUNGSTER, YOUNGSTER...
...WHEN MY *STARBOLTS* CAN DO IT BETTER AND MORE EASILY.
BINARY!
I'M A *DUNCE!* I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT OF YOU RIGHT OFF--!
LIVE AND LEARN, HOTHEAD.
THAT SEEMS TO HAVE DONE THE TRICK.
SELFSYSTEMS ON-LINE, RESTORED TO FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY!

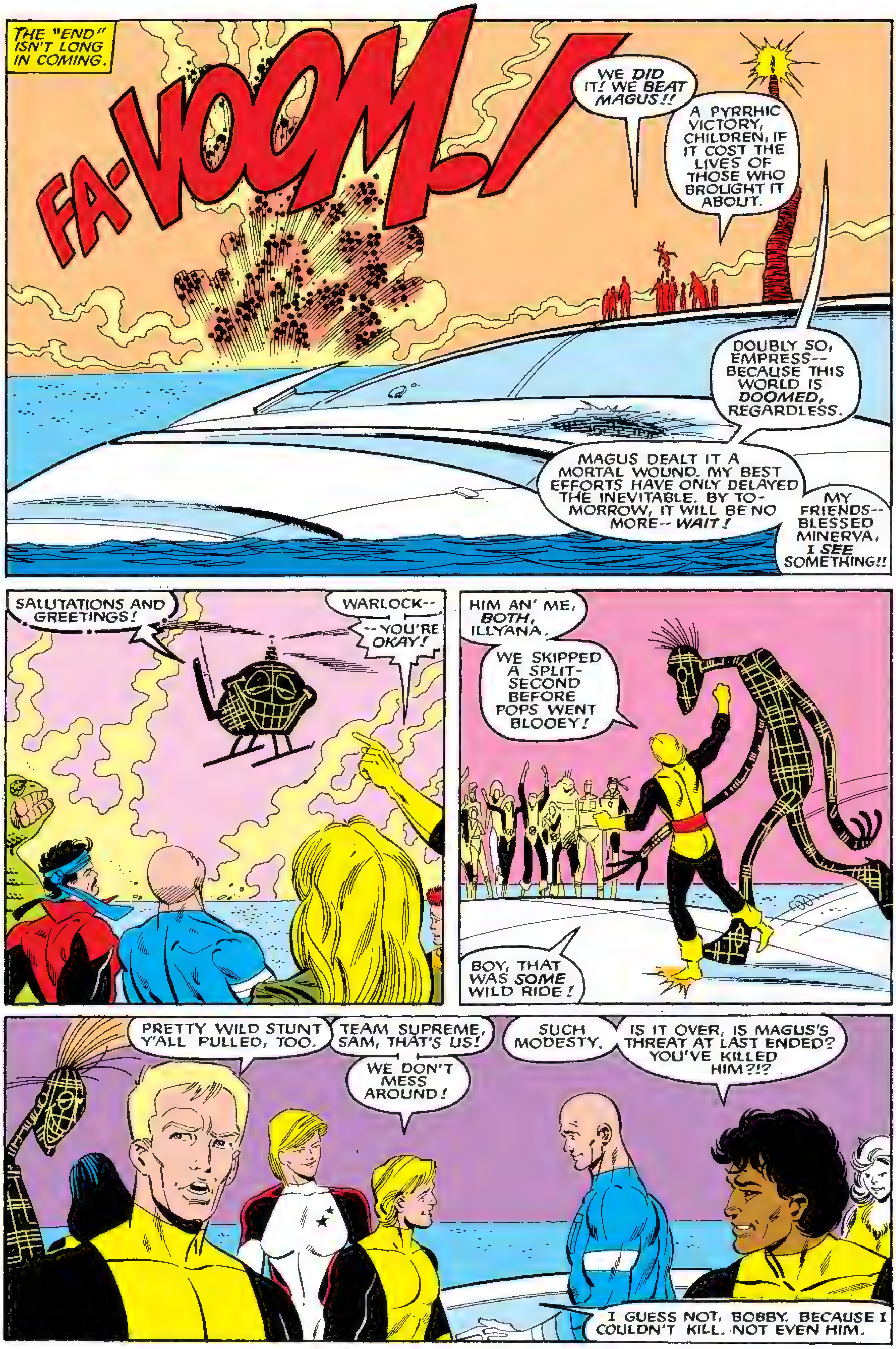

NEVER AGAIN SHALL THE MAGUS BE SO DEFIED!
I SHALL CLAIM, NOT MERELY YOUR LIFEGLOW, WARLOCK--BUT THOSE OF YOUR COMPANIONS AS WELL, TO TEACH THEIR PALTRY RACE THE FOLLY OF INTERFERING IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE TECHNARCH!
MAGUS'S RAGE GROWS, THE STRAIN WORSENS, BY THE SECOND--
--BEYOND ENDURANCE, EVEN WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER'S AID!
I... CANNOT HOLD MUCH LONGER!
WARLOCK!?!
NOT DEAD?!! CONFRONTING ME STILL, MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER--
--HOW CAN THIS BE?!?

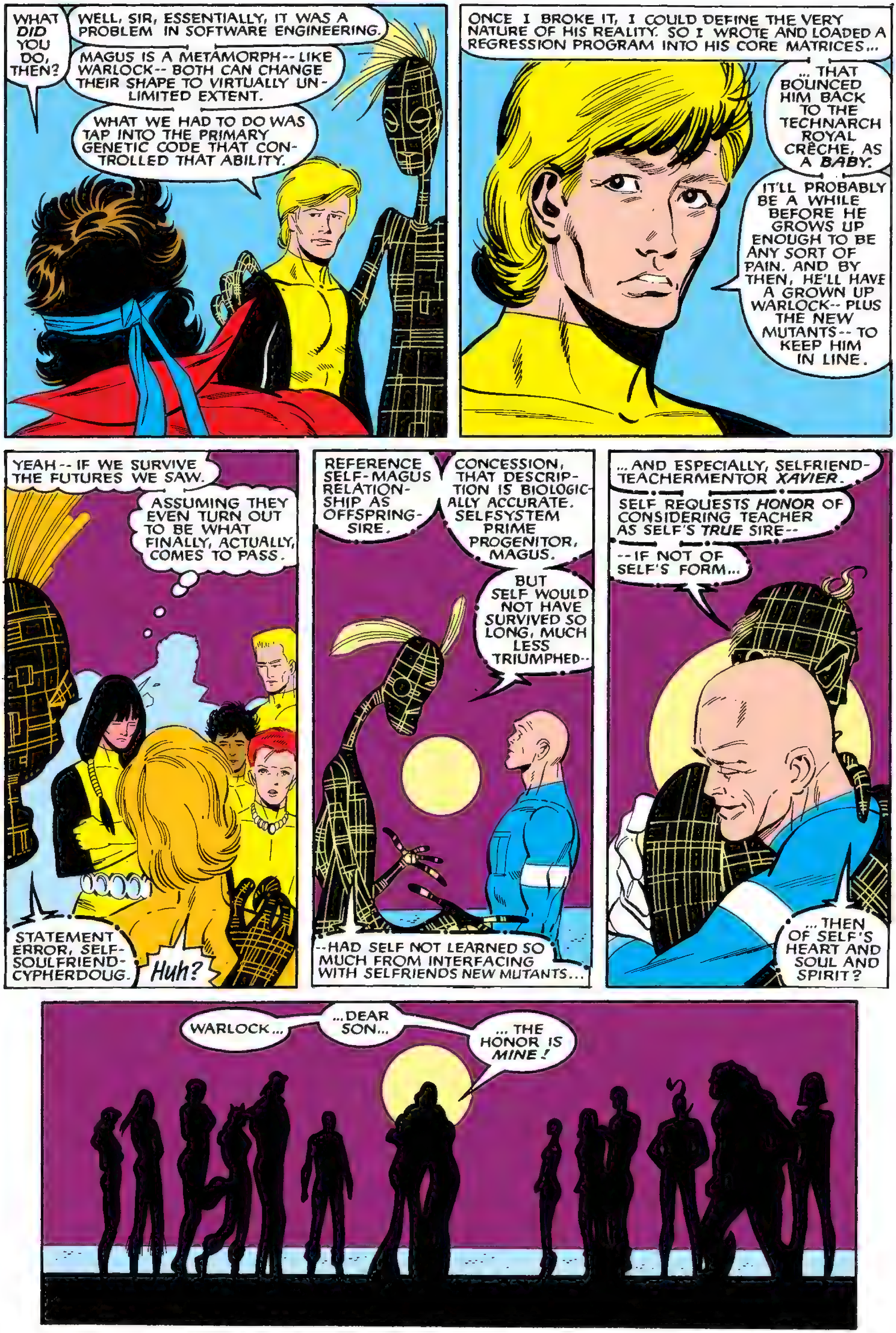

MY SPIRIT-FORM WON'T FOOL HIM LONG--!
IT WILL NOT HAVE TO.
NOW, KARMA, SHARE YOUR POWER WITH MINE-- FOLLOW MY GUIDANCE, DRAW ON MY STRENGTH--
--AND POSSESS MAGUS!
C'EST IMPOSSIBLE--
--I HAVE DONE IT!
FOR A HEARTBEAT, ALL IS SUDDENLY, SUPERNALLY SILENT ACROSS THE FACE OF THIS MURDERED WORLD.
THE MAGUS STANDS FROZEN...
...COMPLETELY ENTHRALLED.
POUR ON THE SPEED, PARTNER--
--WE'VE GOT TO BE ABOARD BEFORE YOUR DAD BREAKS FREE!
LANDING EFFECTED. SELFSYSTEMSTATUS NOMINAL.
SO FAR, SO GOOD.
IT IS SO NEAT WHEN WE SOULMERGE, 'LOCK. I FEEL LIKE I CAN DO ANYTHING!
INITIATE SCANPROBES-- AND PLUG ME INTO THE MAGUS'S PRIMARY GENETIC STRUCTURE.


HERE IT COMES--THE MATHEMATICAL FORMULATION OF WHAT MAKES DAD TICK. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS MAKE SENSE OF IT, INSTANTLY!
BUT THAT'S WHAT CYPHER DOES, RIGHT? TRANSLATE LANGUAGES. AND MATH IS THE ULTIMATE, PRIMAL LANGUAGE.
THERE'S SO MUCH, THOUGH-- AND... SO COMPLEX--
--HANG IN THERE, KARMA, PLEASE! I NEED TIME TO PUZZLE THIS OUT!
"KEEP HIM ZONKED A WHILE LONGER...
I-- CANNOT!
INTRUDERS-- MY SON HAS SOULMERGED WITH A BIOFORM --BUT SUCH A MAD ACT WILL NOT SAVE THEM!
Whoops!
WE'VE BEEN RUMBLED!
VORP
VORP
CONCERN UNNECESSARY-- SELF'S DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE OF NEUTRALIZING BEAMS' EFFECTS.
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
WHAT ABOUT THESE GUYS?!
MAGUS HAS WHIPPED UP SOME KIND OF GIANT-SIZED ANTIBODY CREATURES!
THAT, SILLY BOY, IS WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR.
BINARY! SUNSPOT!!
GET BACK TO WORK, CYPHER--
--LEAVE THESE BRUISERS TO US!
AT LAST--
--THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
SPLAM!


UNFORTUNATELY...
THERE'S NO END TO THESE MONSTERS!
AND EACH NEW FOE IS DOUBLE THE STRENGTH OF THE ONE BEFORE!
WE'RE PUSHING OUR LIMITS, YOUNGSTER! TIME'S RUNNING SHORT!!
I KNOW, BINARY--
--ONLY... I'M NOT SURE-- TOO MUCH PRESSURE-- CAN'T RELAX, CONCENTRATE, THINK--
--THE PATTERN EXISTS, BUT I CAN'T ISOLATE IT! I NEED HELP--
--PROFESSOR XAVIER, PLEASE!
YOU HEARD THE BOY, PROF-- HE'S OUT OF HIS DEPTH-- YOU'D BETTER TAKE OVER!
I MUST NOT, BINARY-- ESPECIALLY NOW-- IF I DO, CYPHER WILL ALWAYS BE DEPENDENT ON ME.
AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN, WHEN I AM NO LONGER THERE?
THIS IS NO CLASSROOM, XAVIER!
YOU ARE WRONG.
ALL LIFE-- EVERY MOMENT-- IS ONE, FOR THOSE WILLING TO LEARN.
THE KEY IS WITHIN YOUR GRASP, DOUGLAS. BE CALM, AS I TAUGHT YOU-- HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITIES, AND YOUR OWN COURAGE--
--AND YOU WILL FIND IT.
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
"BECAUSE, LAD, I KNOW WHEREOF I SPEAK."
PATTERNS-- STRUCTURE-- ALL THINGS HAVE THEM.
ALL LIFE IS BASED ON A GENETIC CODE.
MAGUS'S IS LIKE WARLOCKS-- AND WARLOCK IS A PART OF ME!
THE KEY THE PROFESSOR SPOKE OF IS-- KNOWING MYSELF!
ONLY ONE CHANCE--
--GOTTA HIT HARD, FAST-- PUNCH-SLIP PAST MAGUS'S DEFENSES BEFORE HE REALIZES WHAT I'M UP TO AND SETS UP A COUNTER--
--BINGO!


NO!
MAKER FRY YOUR CIRCUITS, BIOFORM--
--WHAT HAVE YOU AND WARLOCK *DONE?!?*
HIT THE PROVERBIAL JACKPOT, SEEMS TO ME!
OUR JOB'S DONE, SUNSPOT!
LET'S *ROLL!*
BUT DOUG AND WARLOCK--
--BINARY, WE CAN'T JUST *LEAVE* THEM!
CAN AND WILL, CHUM, IF WE WANT TO LIVE.
I KNOW IT'S TOUGH--
--BUT THIS IS *THEIR* PLAY.
THEY HAVE TO SEE IT THROUGH TO THE END.


THE "END" ISN'T LONG IN COMING.
FA-VOOM!!
WE *DID* IT! WE *BEAT* *MAGUS!!*
A PYRRHIC VICTORY, CHILDREN, IF IT COST THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO BROUGHT IT ABOUT.
DOUBLY SO, EMPRESS-- BECAUSE THIS WORLD IS *DOOMED,* REGARDLESS.
MAGUS DEALT IT A MORTAL WOUND. MY BEST EFFORTS HAVE ONLY DELAYED THE INEVITABLE. BY TOMORROW, IT WILL BE NO MORE-- *WAIT!*
MY FRIENDS-- BLESSED MINERVA, I *SEE* SOMETHING!!
SALUTATIONS AND GREETINGS!
WARLOCK--
--YOU'RE *OKAY!*
HIM AN' ME, *BOTH,* ILLYANA.
WE SKIPPED A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE POPS WENT BLOOEY!
BOY, THAT WAS *SOME* WILD RIDE!
PRETTY WILD STUNT Y'ALL PULLED, TOO.
TEAM SUPREME, SAM, THAT'S US!
WE DON'T MESS AROUND!
SUCH MODESTY.
IS IT OVER, IS MAGUS'S THREAT AT LAST ENDED? YOU'VE KILLED HIM?!?
I GUESS NOT, BOBBY. BECAUSE I COULDN'T KILL. NOT EVEN HIM.


WHAT *DID* YOU DO, THEN?
WELL, SIR, ESSENTIALLY, IT WAS A PROBLEM IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING.
MAGUS IS A METAMORPH -- LIKE WARLOCK -- BOTH CAN CHANGE THEIR SHAPE TO VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED EXTENT.
WHAT WE HAD TO DO WAS TAP INTO THE PRIMARY GENETIC CODE THAT CONTROLLED THAT ABILITY.
ONCE I BROKE IT, I COULD DEFINE THE VERY NATURE OF HIS REALITY. SO I WROTE AND LOADED A REGRESSION PROGRAM INTO HIS CORE MATRICES...
... THAT BOUNCED HIM BACK TO THE TECHNARCH ROYAL CRÊCHE, AS A *BABY.*
IT'LL PROBABLY BE A WHILE BEFORE HE GROWS UP ENOUGH TO BE ANY SORT OF PAIN. AND BY THEN, HE'LL HAVE A GROWN UP WARLOCK -- PLUS THE NEW MUTANTS -- TO KEEP HIM IN LINE.
YEAH -- IF WE SURVIVE THE FUTURES WE SAW.
ASSUMING THEY EVEN TURN OUT TO BE WHAT FINALLY, ACTUALLY, COMES TO PASS.
STATEMENT ERROR, SELF-SOULFRIEND-CYPHERDOUG.
Huh?
REFERENCE SELF-MAGUS RELATIONSHIP AS OFFSPRING-SIRE.
CONCESSION, THAT DESCRIPTION IS BIOLOGICALLY ACCURATE. SELFSYSTEM PRIME PROGENITOR, MAGUS.
BUT SELF WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED SO LONG, MUCH LESS TRIUMPHED --
-- HAD SELF NOT LEARNED SO MUCH FROM INTERFACING WITH SELFRIENDS NEW MUTANTS...
... AND ESPECIALLY, SELFRIEND-TEACHERMENTOR *XAVIER.*
SELF REQUESTS *HONOR* OF CONSIDERING TEACHER AS SELF'S *TRUE* SIRE --
-- IF NOT OF SELF'S FORM...
... THEN OF SELF'S HEART AND SOUL AND SPIRIT?
WARLOCK...
... DEAR SON...
... THE HONOR IS *MINE!*

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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GUEST-STARRING PROFESSOR X AND THE STARJAMMERS!

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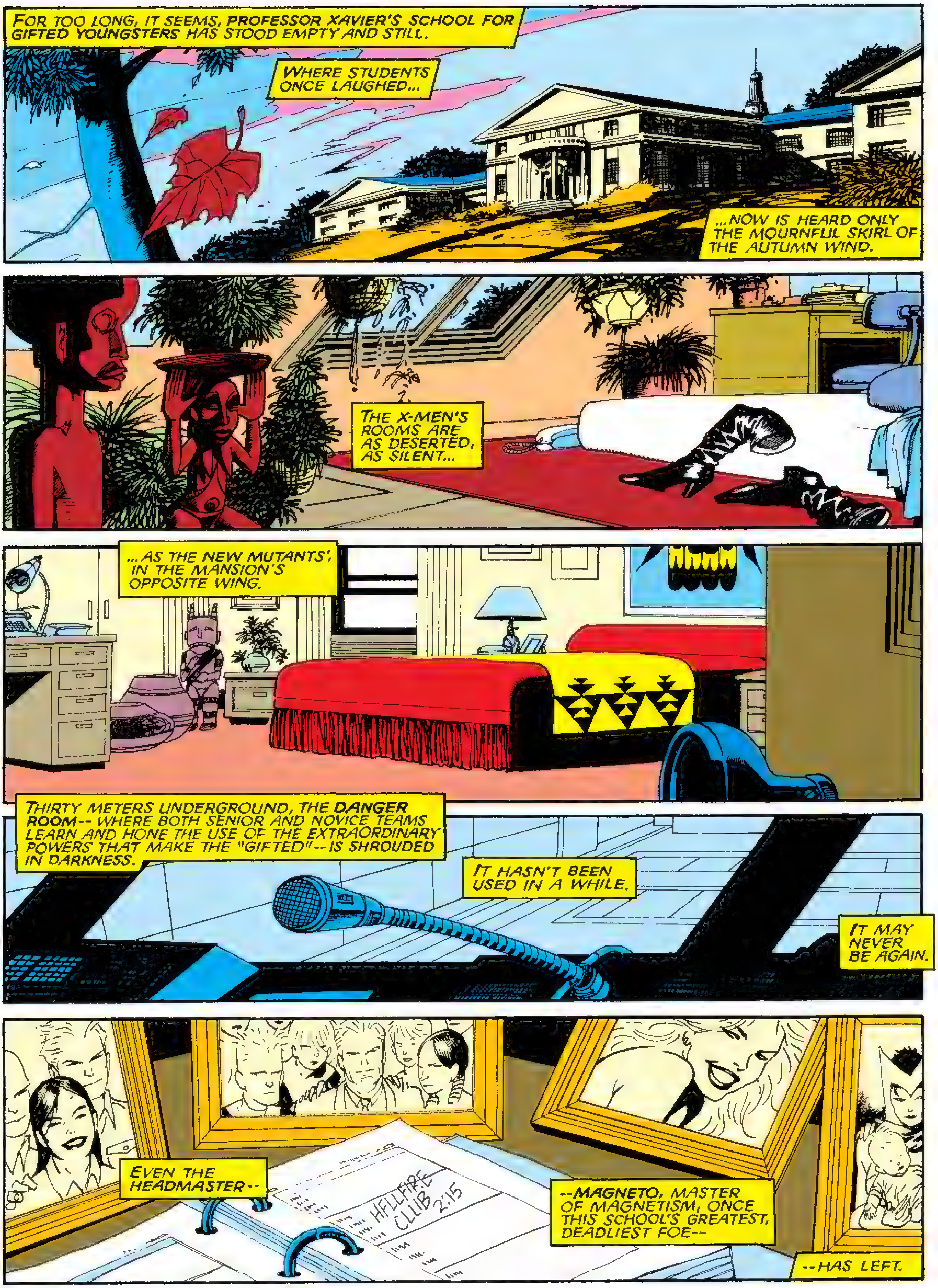
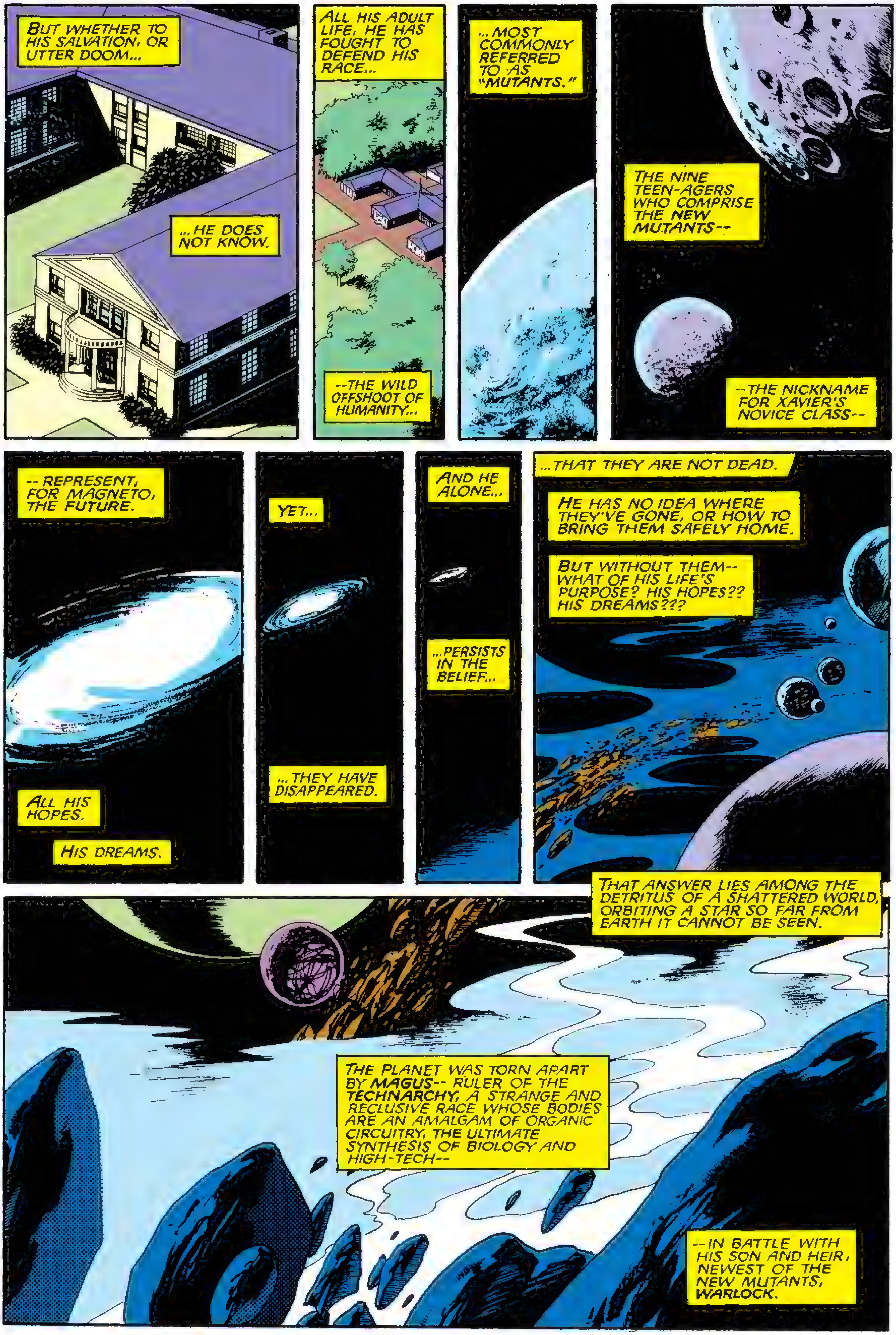
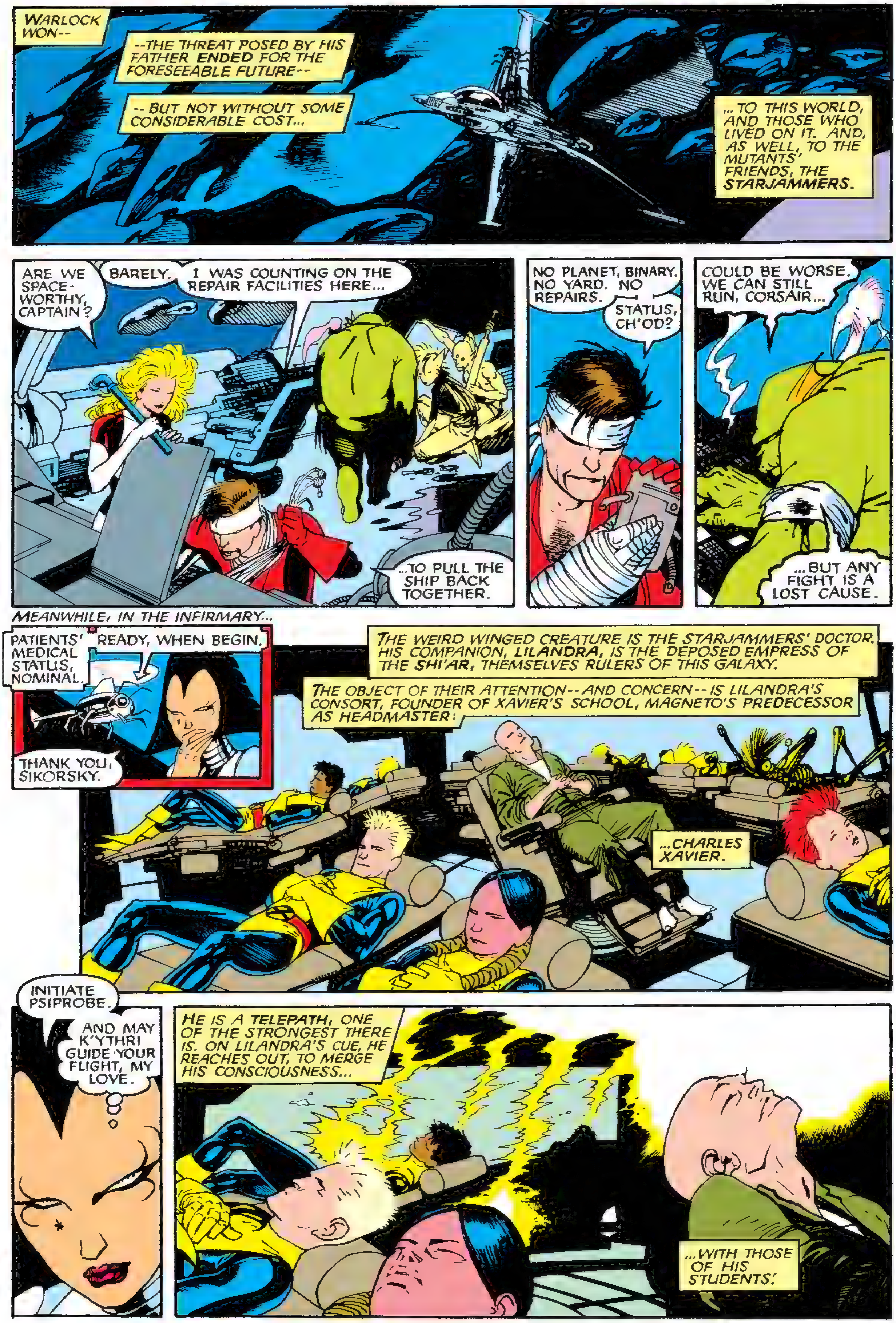
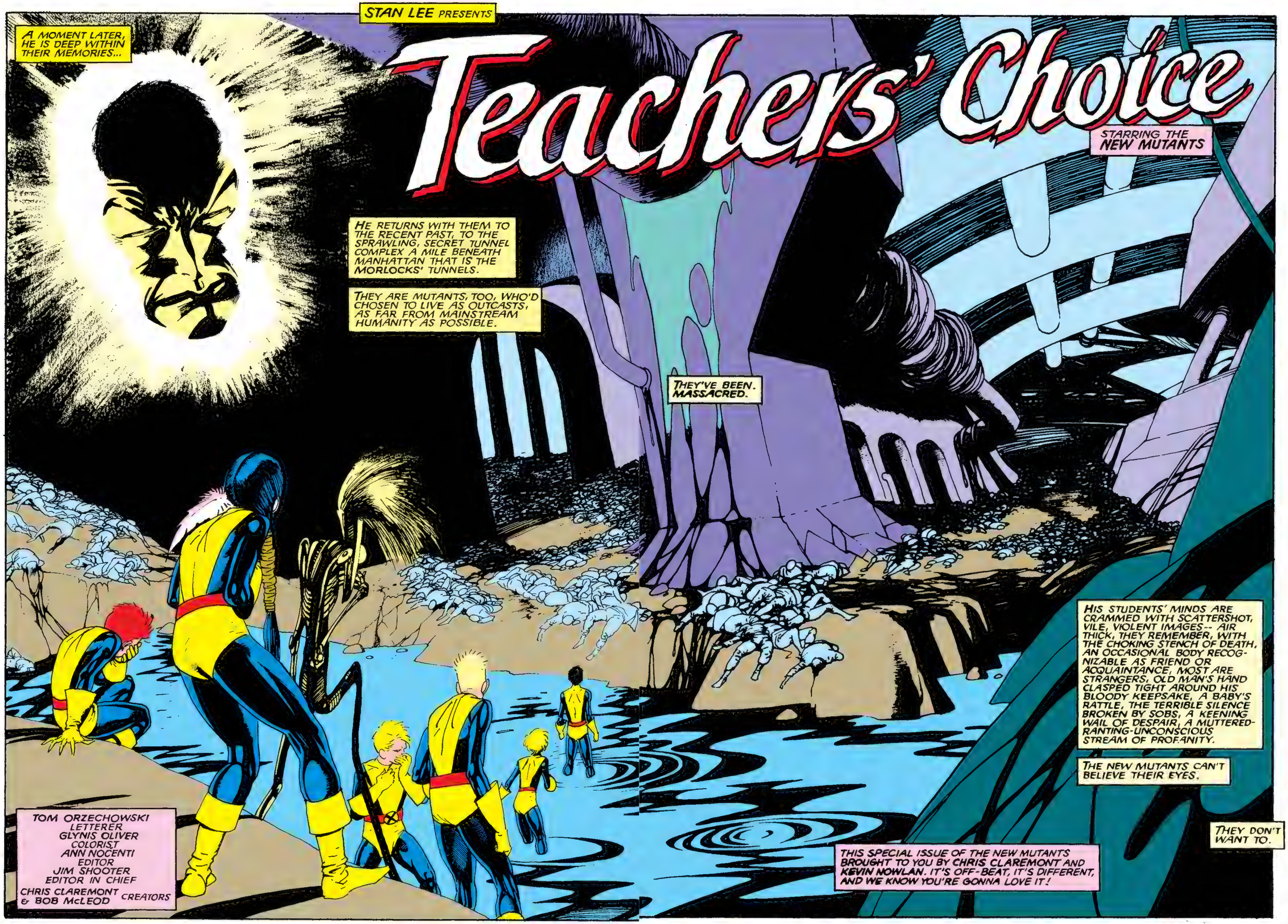

FOR TOO LONG, IT SEEMS, PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS HAS STOOD EMPTY AND STILL.
WHERE STUDENTS ONCE LAUGHED...
...NOW IS HEARD ONLY THE MOURNFUL SKIRL OF THE AUTUMN WIND.
THE X-MEN'S ROOMS ARE AS DESERTED, AS SILENT...
...AS THE NEW MUTANTS', IN THE MANSION'S OPPOSITE WING.
THIRTY METERS UNDERGROUND, THE DANGER ROOM-- WHERE BOTH SENIOR AND NOVICE TEAMS LEARN AND HONE THE USE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY POWERS THAT MAKE THE "GIFTED"-- IS SHROUDED IN DARKNESS.
IT HASN'T BEEN USED IN A WHILE.
IT MAY NEVER BE AGAIN.
EVEN THE HEADMASTER--
HELLFIRE CLUB 2:15
--MAGNETO, MASTER OF MAGNETISM, ONCE THIS SCHOOL'S GREATEST, DEADLIEST FOE--
--HAS LEFT.


BUT WHETHER TO HIS SALVATION, OR UTTER DOOM...
...HE DOES NOT KNOW.
ALL HIS ADULT LIFE, HE HAS FOUGHT TO DEFEND HIS RACE...
--THE WILD OFFSHOOT OF HUMANITY...
...MOST COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS "MUTANTS."
THE NINE TEEN-AGERS WHO COMPRISE THE NEW MUTANTS--
--THE NICKNAME FOR XAVIER'S NOVICE CLASS--
-- REPRESENT, FOR MAGNETO, THE FUTURE.
ALL HIS HOPES.
HIS DREAMS.
YET...
...THEY HAVE DISAPPEARED.
AND HE ALONE...
...PERSISTS IN THE BELIEF...
...THAT THEY ARE NOT DEAD.
HE HAS NO IDEA WHERE THEY'VE GONE, OR HOW TO BRING THEM SAFELY HOME.
BUT WITHOUT THEM-- WHAT OF HIS LIFE'S PURPOSE? HIS HOPES?? HIS DREAMS???
THAT ANSWER LIES AMONG THE DETRITUS OF A SHATTERED WORLD, ORBITING A STAR SO FAR FROM EARTH IT CANNOT BE SEEN.
THE PLANET WAS TORN APART BY MAGUS-- RULER OF THE TECHNARCHY, A STRANGE AND RECLUSIVE RACE WHOSE BODIES ARE AN AMALGAM OF ORGANIC CIRCUITRY, THE ULTIMATE SYNTHESIS OF BIOLOGY AND HIGH-TECH--
--IN BATTLE WITH HIS SON AND HEIR, NEWEST OF THE NEW MUTANTS, WARLOCK.


WARLOCK WON--
--THE THREAT POSED BY HIS FATHER ENDED FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE--
-- BUT NOT WITHOUT SOME CONSIDERABLE COST...
...TO THIS WORLD, AND THOSE WHO LIVED ON IT. AND, AS WELL, TO THE MUTANTS' FRIENDS, THE STARJAMMERS.
ARE WE SPACE-WORTHY, CAPTAIN?
BARELY.
I WAS COUNTING ON THE REPAIR FACILITIES HERE...
...TO PULL THE SHIP BACK TOGETHER.
NO PLANET, BINARY. NO YARD. NO REPAIRS.
STATUS, CH'OD?
COULD BE WORSE. WE CAN STILL RUN, CORSAIR...
...BUT ANY FIGHT IS A LOST CAUSE.
MEANWHILE, IN THE INFIRMARY...
PATIENTS' MEDICAL STATUS, NOMINAL.
READY, WHEN BEGIN.
THANK YOU, SIKORSKY.
THE WEIRD WINGED CREATURE IS THE STARJAMMERS' DOCTOR. HIS COMPANION, LILANDRA, IS THE DEPOSED EMPRESS OF THE SHI'AR, THEMSELVES RULERS OF THIS GALAXY.
THE OBJECT OF THEIR ATTENTION--AND CONCERN--IS LILANDRA'S CONSORT, FOUNDER OF XAVIER'S SCHOOL, MAGNETO'S PREDECESSOR AS HEADMASTER:
...CHARLES XAVIER.
INITIATE PSIPROBE.
AND MAY K'YTHRI GUIDE YOUR FLIGHT, MY LOVE.
HE IS A TELEPATH, ONE OF THE STRONGEST THERE IS. ON LILANDRA'S CUE, HE REACHES OUT, TO MERGE HIS CONSCIOUSNESS...
...WITH THOSE OF HIS STUDENTS!


STAN LEE PRESENTS
A MOMENT LATER, HE IS DEEP WITHIN THEIR MEMORIES...
Teachers' Choice
STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS
HE RETURNS WITH THEM TO THE RECENT PAST, TO THE SPRAWLING, SECRET TUNNEL COMPLEX A MILE BENEATH MANHATTAN THAT IS THE MORLOCKS' TUNNELS.
THEY ARE MUTANTS, TOO, WHO'D CHOSEN TO LIVE AS OUTCASTS, AS FAR FROM MAINSTREAM HUMANITY AS POSSIBLE.
THEY'VE BEEN. MASSACRED.
HIS STUDENTS' MINDS ARE CRAMMED WITH SCATTERSHOT, VILE, VIOLENT IMAGES-- AIR THICK, THEY REMEMBER, WITH THE CHOKING STENCH OF DEATH, AN OCCASIONAL BODY RECOGNIZABLE AS FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE, MOST ARE STRANGERS, OLD MAN'S HAND CLASPED TIGHT AROUND HIS BLOODY KEEPSAKE, A BABY'S RATTLE, THE TERRIBLE SILENCE BROKEN BY SOBS, A KEENING WAIL OF DESPAIR, A MUTTERED-RANTING-UNCONSCIOUS STREAM OF PROFANITY.
THE NEW MUTANTS CAN'T BELIEVE THEIR EYES.
THEY DON'T WANT TO.
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF
CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD CREATORS
THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE NEW MUTANTS BROUGHT TO YOU BY CHRIS CLAREMONT AND KEVIN NOWLAN. IT'S OFF-BEAT, IT'S DIFFERENT, AND WE KNOW YOU'RE GONNA LOVE IT!

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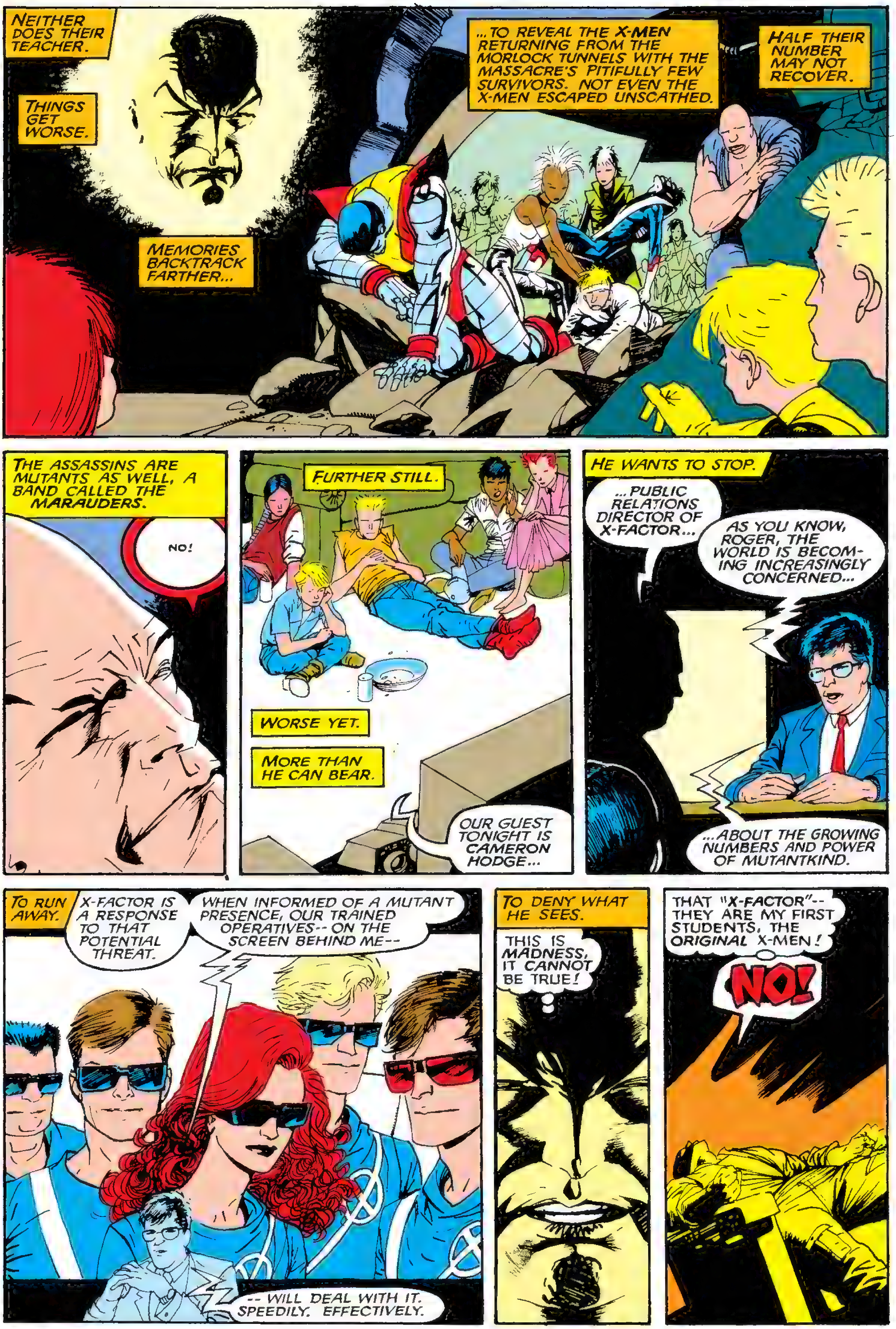
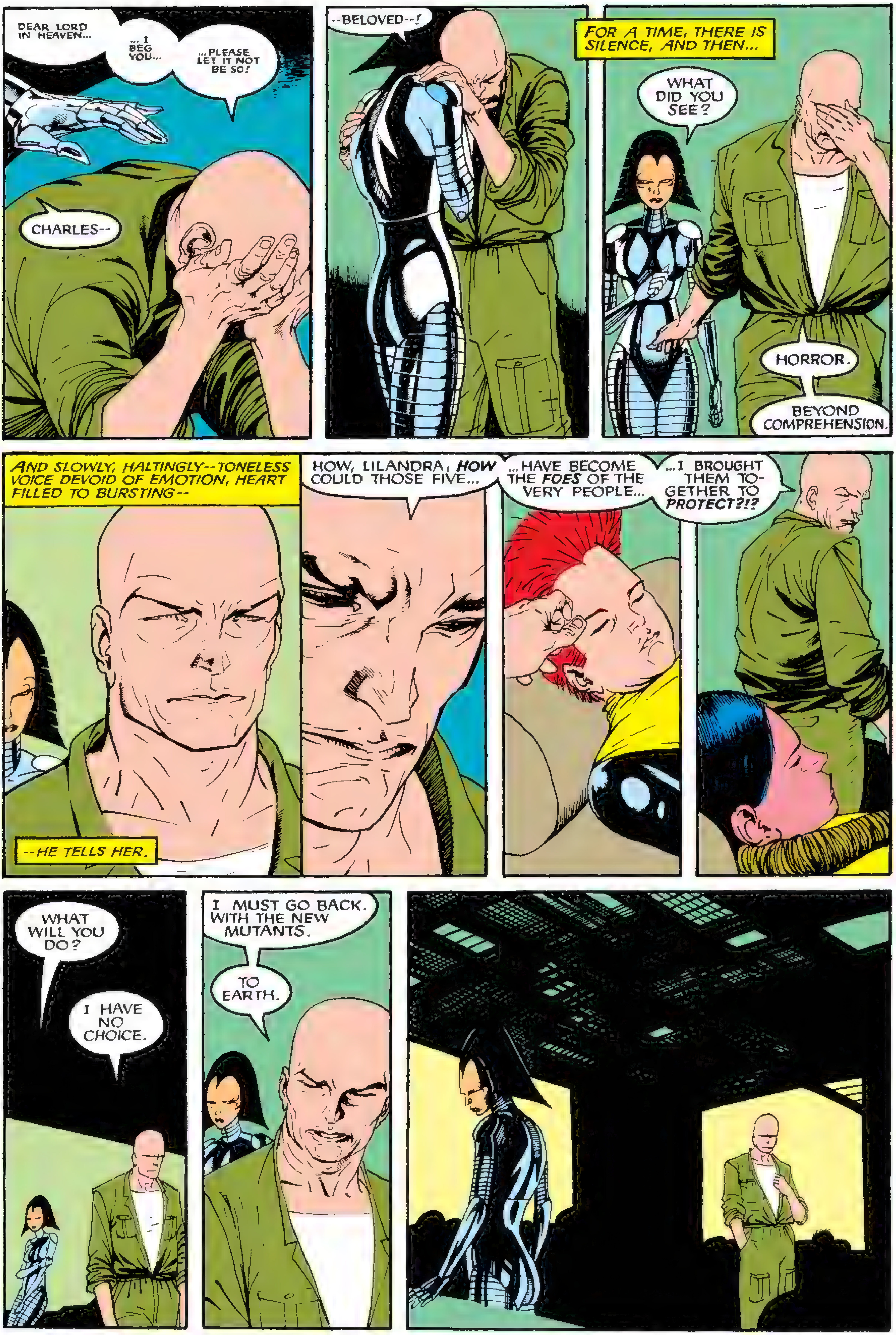
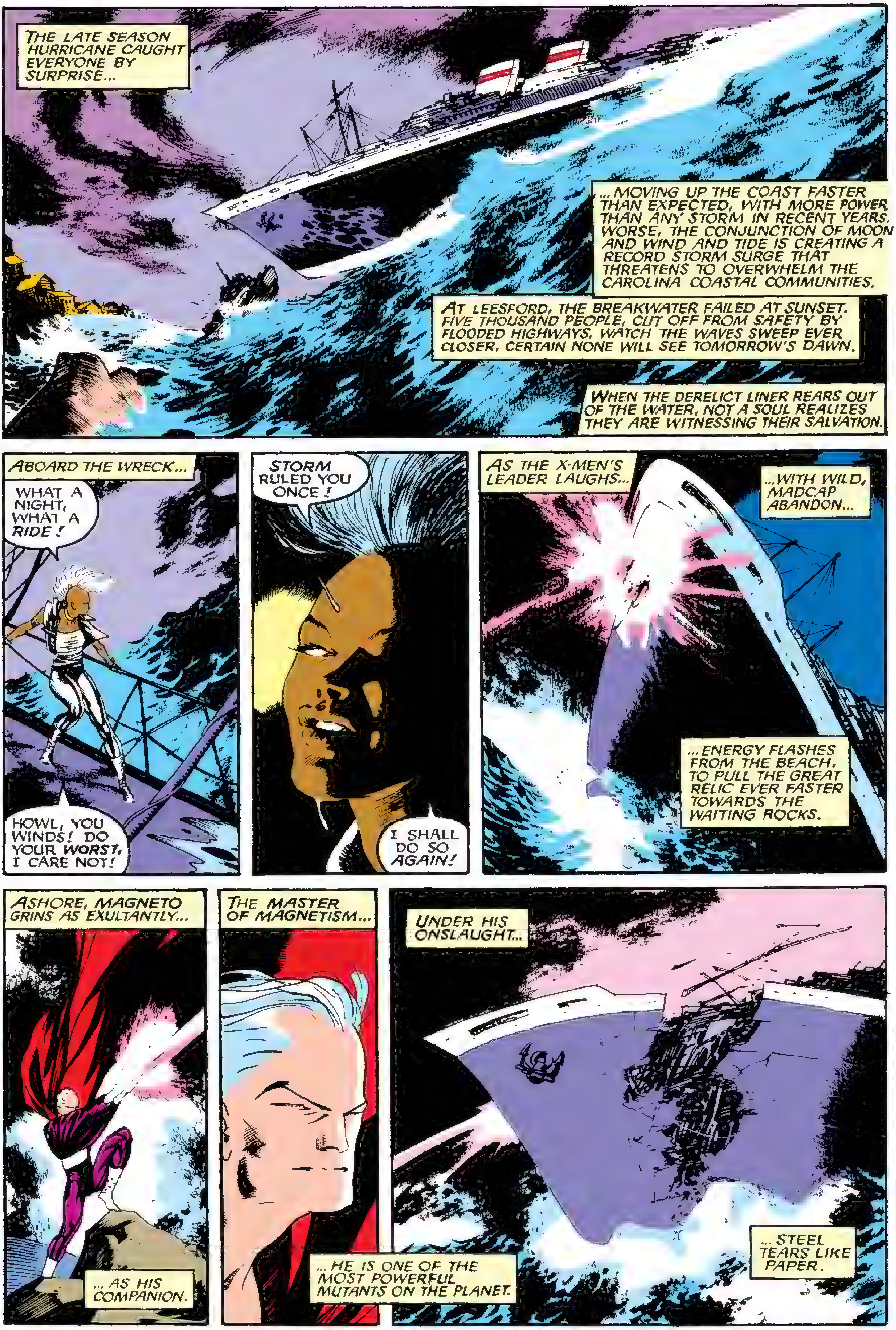
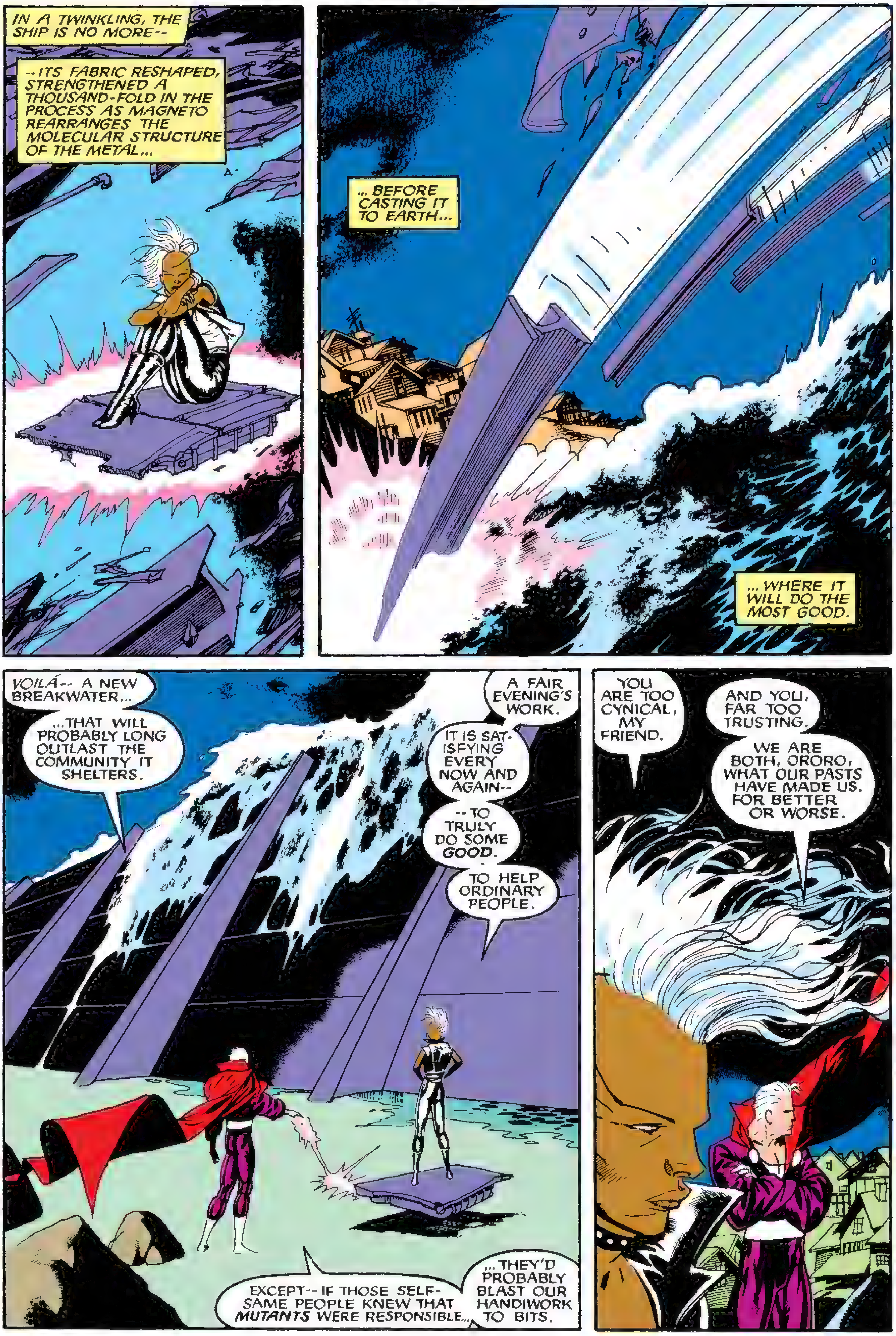
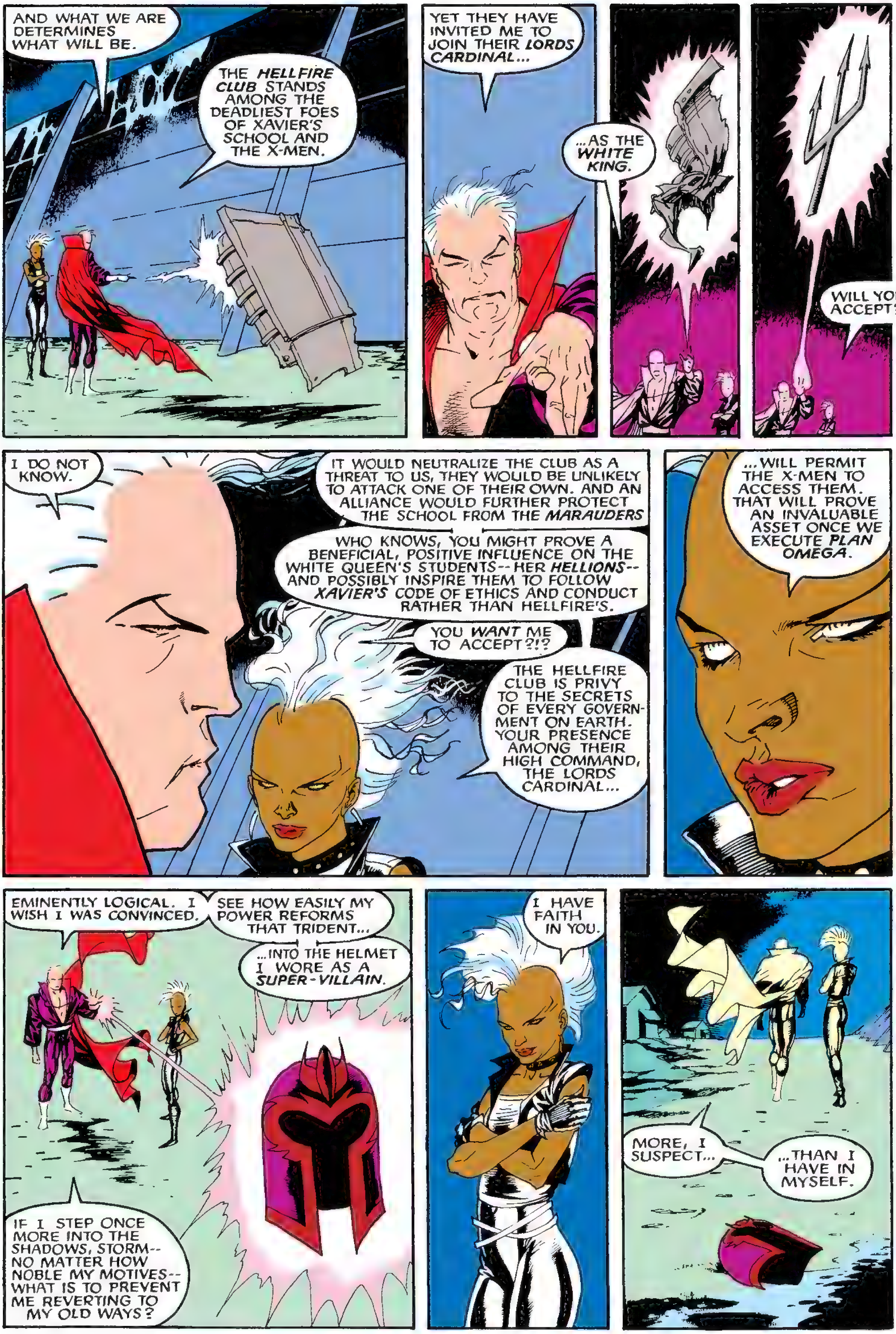
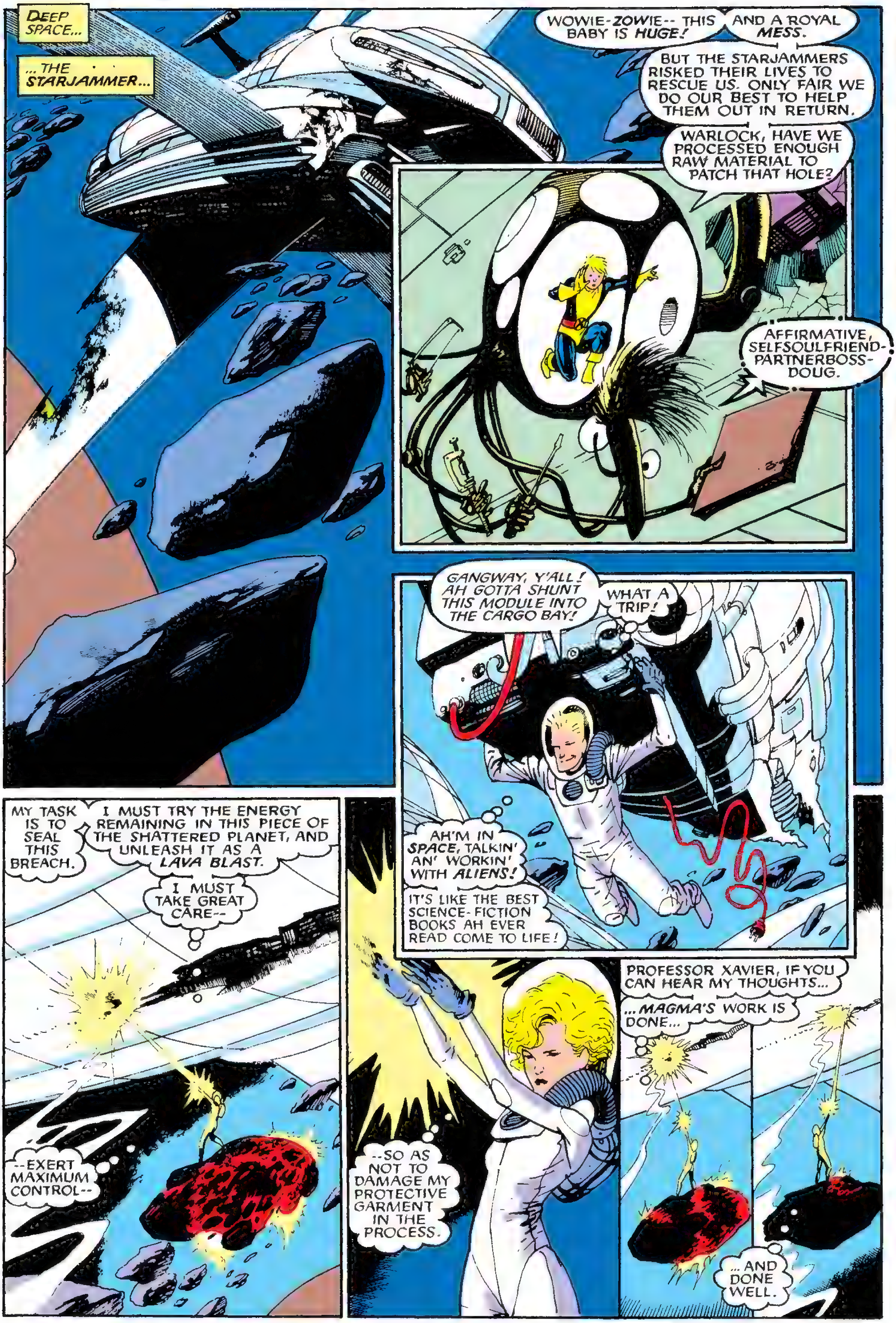

NEITHER DOES THEIR TEACHER.
THINGS GET WORSE.
MEMORIES BACKTRACK FARTHER...
...TO REVEAL THE X-MEN RETURNING FROM THE MORLOCK TUNNELS WITH THE MASSACRE'S PITIFULLY FEW SURVIVORS. NOT EVEN THE X-MEN ESCAPED UNSCATHED.
HALF THEIR NUMBER MAY NOT RECOVER.
THE ASSASSINS ARE MUTANTS AS WELL, A BAND CALLED THE MARAUDERS.
NO!
FURTHER STILL.
WORSE YET.
MORE THAN HE CAN BEAR.
OUR GUEST TONIGHT IS CAMERON HODGE...
HE WANTS TO STOP.
...PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF X-FACTOR...
AS YOU KNOW, ROGER, THE WORLD IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED...
...ABOUT THE GROWING NUMBERS AND POWER OF MUTANTKIND.
TO RUN AWAY.
X-FACTOR IS A RESPONSE TO THAT POTENTIAL THREAT.
WHEN INFORMED OF A MUTANT PRESENCE, OUR TRAINED OPERATIVES-- ON THE SCREEN BEHIND ME--
-- WILL DEAL WITH IT. SPEEDILY. EFFECTIVELY.
TO DENY WHAT HE SEES.
THIS IS MADNESS. IT CANNOT BE TRUE!
THAT "X-FACTOR"-- THEY ARE MY FIRST STUDENTS, THE ORIGINAL X-MEN!
NO!

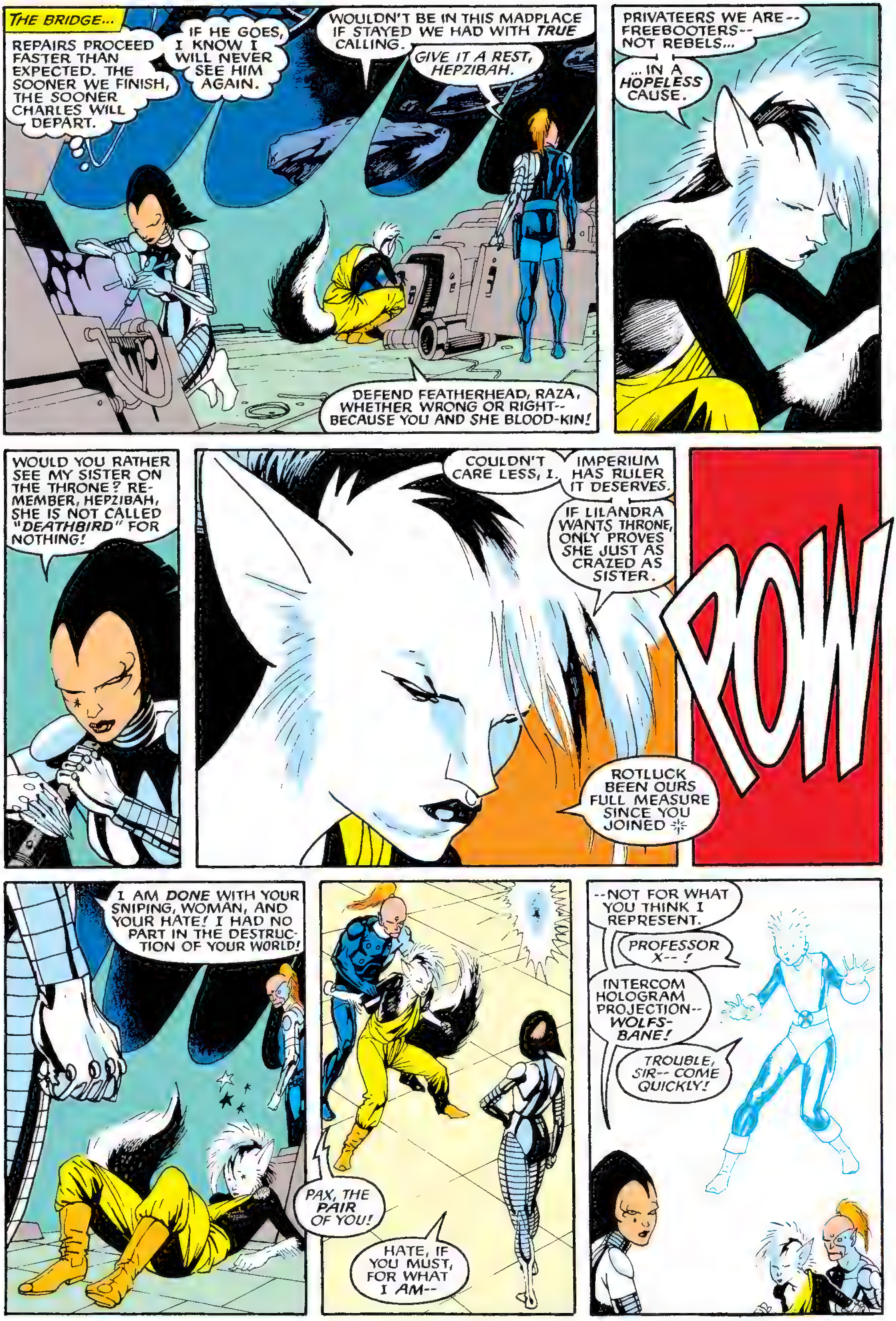

DEAR LORD IN HEAVEN...
...I BEG YOU...
...PLEASE LET IT NOT BE SO!
CHARLES--
--BELOVED--!
FOR A TIME, THERE IS SILENCE, AND THEN...
WHAT DID YOU SEE?
HORROR.
BEYOND COMPREHENSION.
AND SLOWLY, HALTINGLY--TONELESS VOICE DEVOID OF EMOTION, HEART FILLED TO BURSTING--
--HE TELLS HER.
HOW, LILANDRA, HOW COULD THOSE FIVE...
...HAVE BECOME THE FOES OF THE VERY PEOPLE...
...I BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER TO PROTECT?!?
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I HAVE NO CHOICE.
I MUST GO BACK. WITH THE NEW MUTANTS.
TO EARTH.

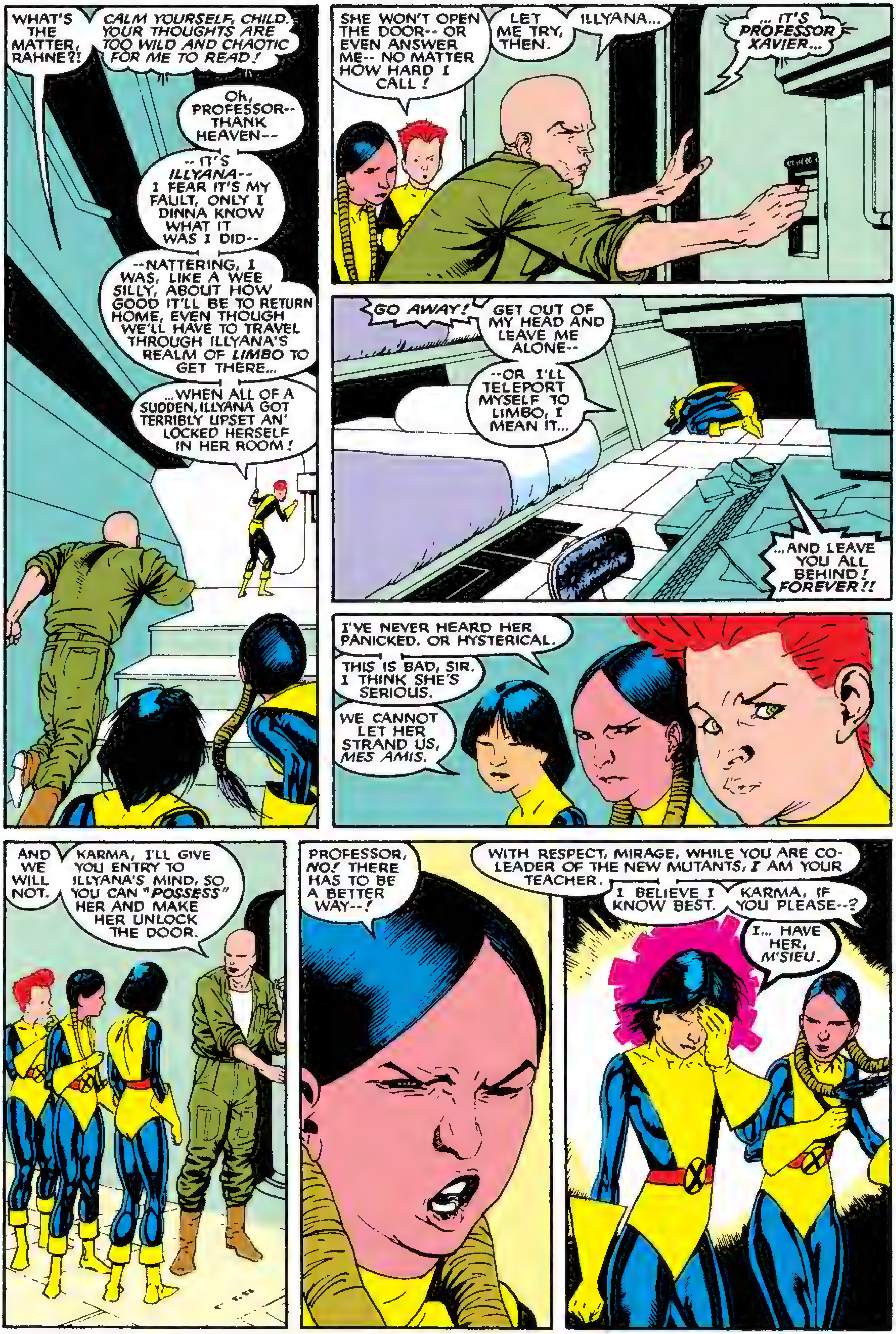

THE LATE SEASON HURRICANE CAUGHT EVERYONE BY SURPRISE...
...MOVING UP THE COAST FASTER THAN EXPECTED, WITH MORE POWER THAN ANY STORM IN RECENT YEARS. WORSE, THE CONJUNCTION OF MOON AND WIND AND TIDE IS CREATING A RECORD STORM SURGE THAT THREATENS TO OVERWHELM THE CAROLINA COASTAL COMMUNITIES.
AT LEESFORD, THE BREAKWATER FAILED AT SUNSET. FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE, CUT OFF FROM SAFETY BY FLOODED HIGHWAYS, WATCH THE WAVES SWEEP EVER CLOSER, CERTAIN NONE WILL SEE TOMORROW'S DAWN.
WHEN THE DERELICT LINER REARS OUT OF THE WATER, NOT A SOUL REALIZES THEY ARE WITNESSING THEIR SALVATION.
ABOARD THE WRECK...
WHAT A NIGHT, WHAT A RIDE!
HOWL, YOU WINDS! DO YOUR WORST, I CARE NOT!
STORM RULED YOU ONCE!
I SHALL DO SO AGAIN!
AS THE X-MEN'S LEADER LAUGHS...
...WITH WILD, MADCAP ABANDON...
...ENERGY FLASHES FROM THE BEACH, TO PULL THE GREAT RELIC EVER FASTER TOWARDS THE WAITING ROCKS.
ASHORE, MAGNETO GRINS AS EXULTANTLY...
...AS HIS COMPANION.
THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM...
...HE IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MUTANTS ON THE PLANET.
UNDER HIS ONSLAUGHT...
...STEEL TEARS LIKE PAPER.

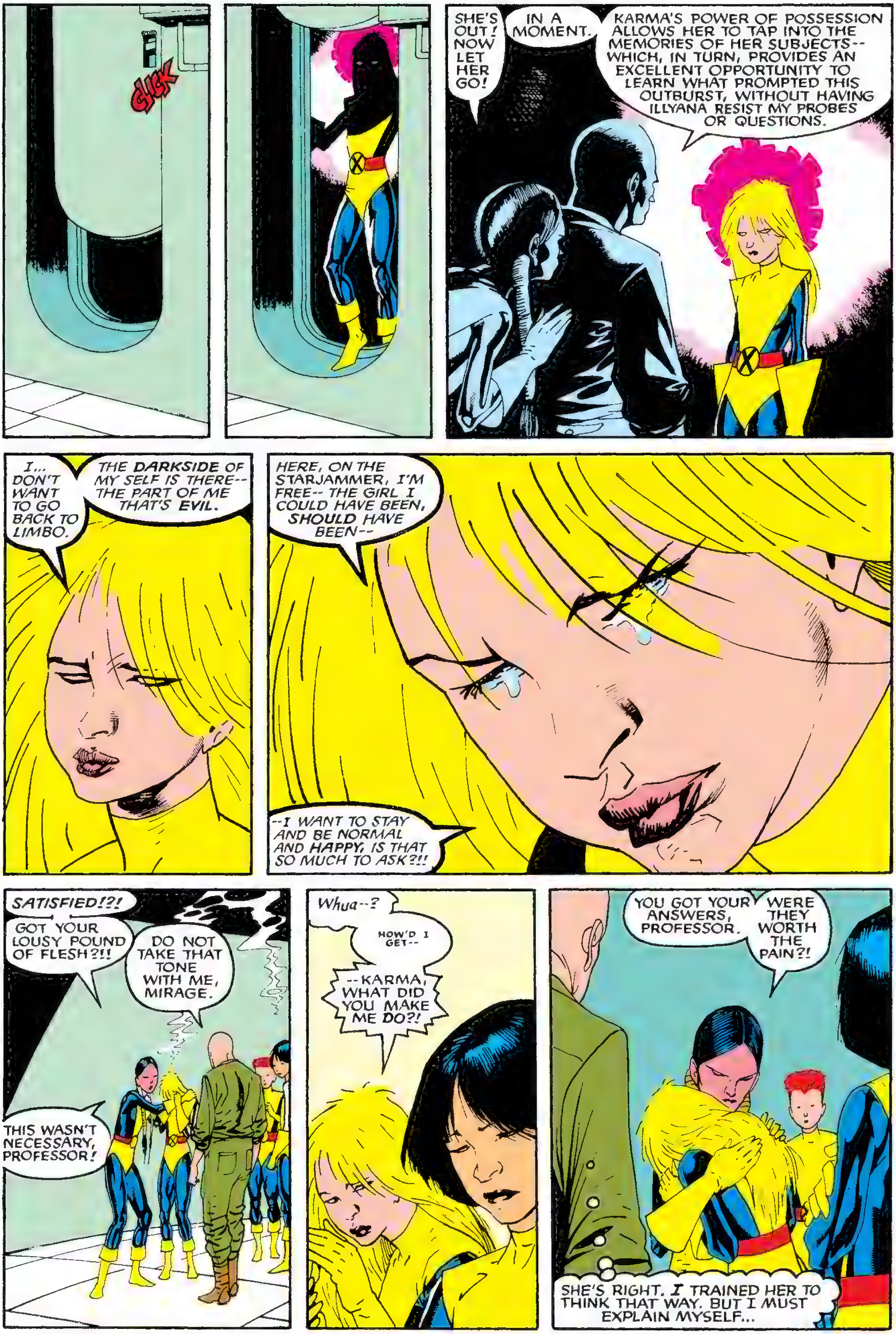

IN A TWINKLING, THE SHIP IS NO MORE--
--ITS FABRIC RESHAPED, STRENGTHENED A THOUSAND-FOLD IN THE PROCESS AS MAGNETO REARRANGES THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THE METAL...
...BEFORE CASTING IT TO EARTH...
...WHERE IT WILL DO THE MOST GOOD.
VOILÁ-- A NEW BREAKWATER...
...THAT WILL PROBABLY LONG OUTLAST THE COMMUNITY IT SHELTERS.
A FAIR EVENING'S WORK.
IT IS SATISFYING EVERY NOW AND AGAIN--
--TO TRULY DO SOME GOOD.
TO HELP ORDINARY PEOPLE.
EXCEPT--IF THOSE SELF-SAME PEOPLE KNEW THAT MUTANTS WERE RESPONSIBLE...
...THEY'D PROBABLY BLAST OUR HANDIWORK TO BITS.
YOU ARE TOO CYNICAL, MY FRIEND.
AND YOU, FAR TOO TRUSTING.
WE ARE BOTH, ORORO, WHAT OUR PASTS HAVE MADE US. FOR BETTER OR WORSE.

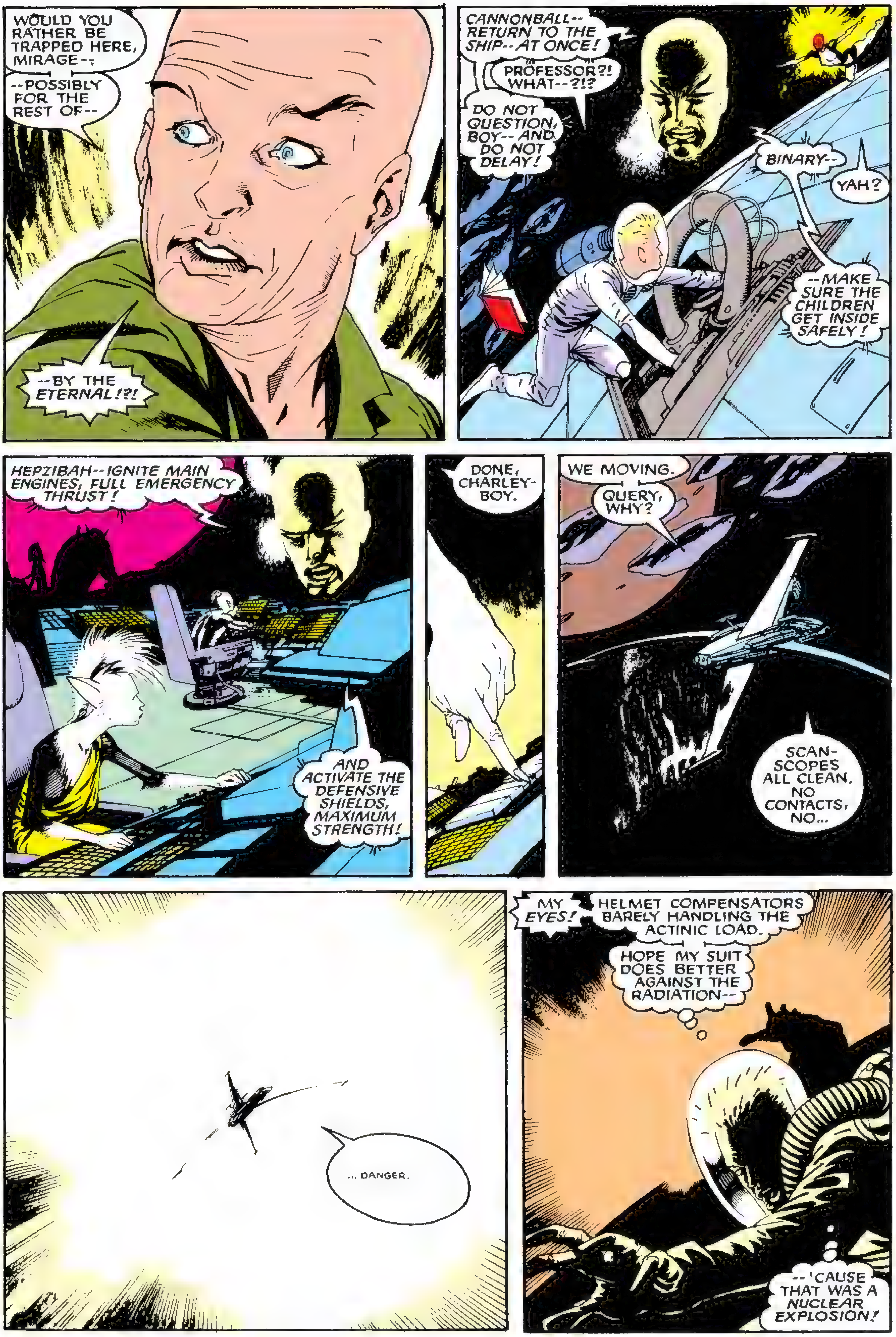

AND WHAT WE ARE DETERMINES WHAT WILL BE.
THE *HELLFIRE CLUB* STANDS AMONG THE DEADLIEST FOES OF XAVIER'S SCHOOL AND THE X-MEN.
YET THEY HAVE INVITED ME TO JOIN THEIR *LORDS CARDINAL*...
...AS THE *WHITE KING*.
WILL YOU ACCEPT?
I DO NOT KNOW.
IT WOULD NEUTRALIZE THE CLUB AS A THREAT TO US, THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO ATTACK ONE OF THEIR OWN. AND AN ALLIANCE WOULD FURTHER PROTECT THE SCHOOL FROM THE *MARAUDERS*
WHO KNOWS, YOU MIGHT PROVE A BENEFICIAL, POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE WHITE QUEEN'S STUDENTS--HER *HELLIONS*--AND POSSIBLY INSPIRE THEM TO FOLLOW *XAVIER'S* CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT RATHER THAN HELLFIRE'S.
YOU *WANT* ME TO ACCEPT?!?
THE HELLFIRE CLUB IS PRIVY TO THE SECRETS OF EVERY GOVERNMENT ON EARTH. YOUR PRESENCE AMONG THEIR HIGH COMMAND, THE LORDS CARDINAL...
...WILL PERMIT THE X-MEN TO ACCESS THEM. THAT WILL PROVE AN INVALUABLE ASSET ONCE WE EXECUTE *PLAN OMEGA*.
EMINENTLY LOGICAL. I WISH I WAS CONVINCED.
SEE HOW EASILY MY POWER REFORMS THAT TRIDENT...
...INTO THE HELMET I WORE AS A *SUPER-VILLAIN*.
IF I STEP ONCE MORE INTO THE SHADOWS, STORM--NO MATTER HOW NOBLE MY MOTIVES--WHAT IS TO PREVENT ME REVERTING TO MY OLD WAYS?
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU.
MORE, I SUSPECT...
...THAN I HAVE IN MYSELF.

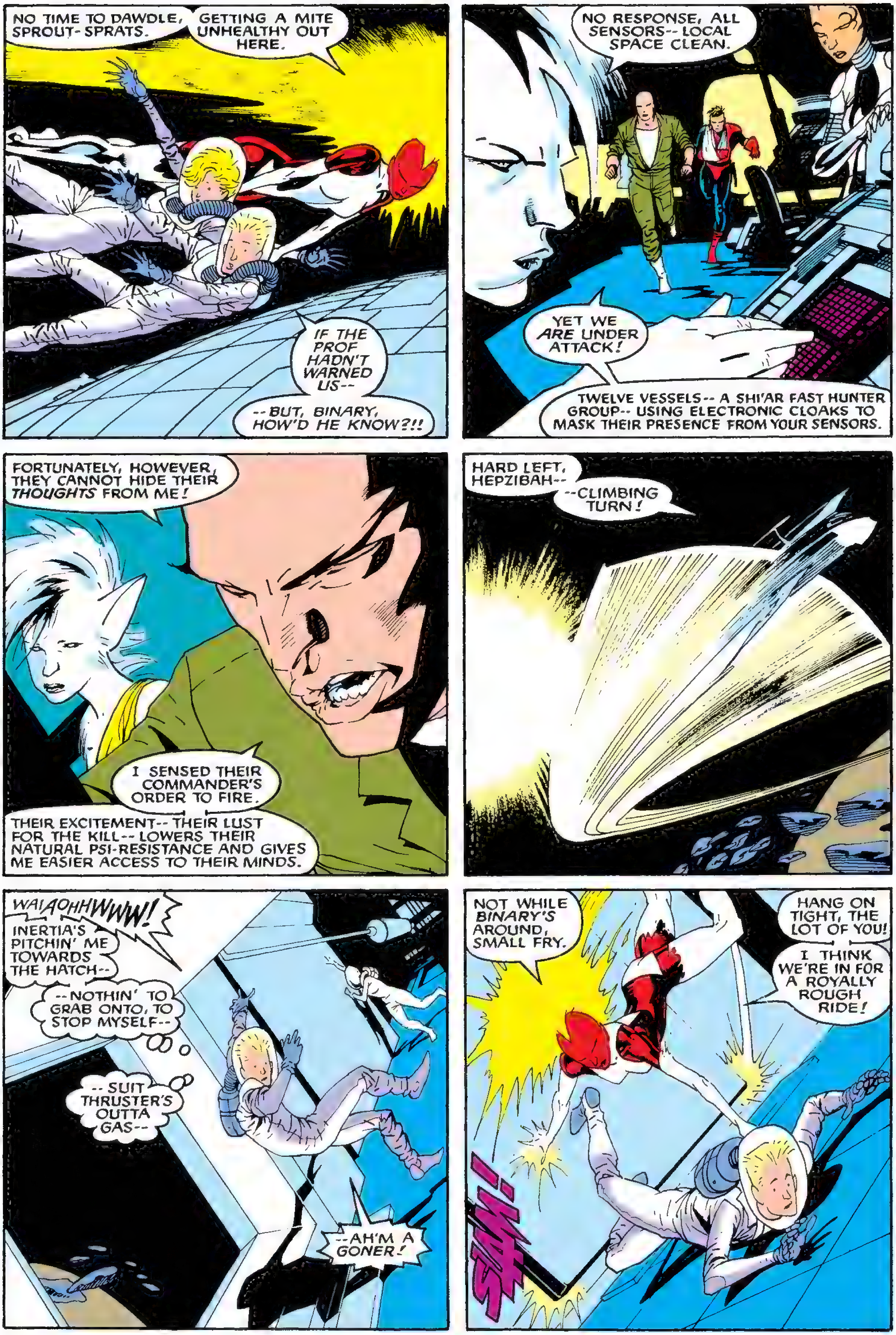

DEEP SPACE...
...THE *STARJAMMER*...
WOWIE-*ZOWIE*-- THIS BABY IS *HUGE!*
AND A ROYAL *MESS*.
BUT THE STARJAMMERS RISKED THEIR LIVES TO RESCUE US. ONLY FAIR WE DO OUR BEST TO HELP THEM OUT IN RETURN.
WARLOCK, HAVE WE PROCESSED ENOUGH RAW MATERIAL TO PATCH THAT HOLE?
AFFIRMATIVE, SELFSOULFRIEND-PARTNERBOSS-DOUG.
GANGWAY, Y'ALL! AH GOTTA SHUNT THIS MODULE INTO THE CARGO BAY!
WHAT A TRIP!
AH'M IN *SPACE*, TALKIN' AN' WORKIN' WITH *ALIENS!*
IT'S LIKE THE BEST SCIENCE-FICTION BOOKS AH EVER READ COME TO LIFE!
MY TASK IS TO SEAL THIS BREACH.
I MUST TRY THE ENERGY REMAINING IN THIS PIECE OF THE SHATTERED PLANET, AND UNLEASH IT AS A *LAVA BLAST*.
I MUST TAKE GREAT CARE--
--EXERT MAXIMUM CONTROL--
--SO AS NOT TO DAMAGE MY PROTECTIVE GARMENT IN THE PROCESS.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, IF YOU CAN HEAR MY THOUGHTS...
...*MAGMA'S* WORK IS DONE...
...AND DONE WELL.

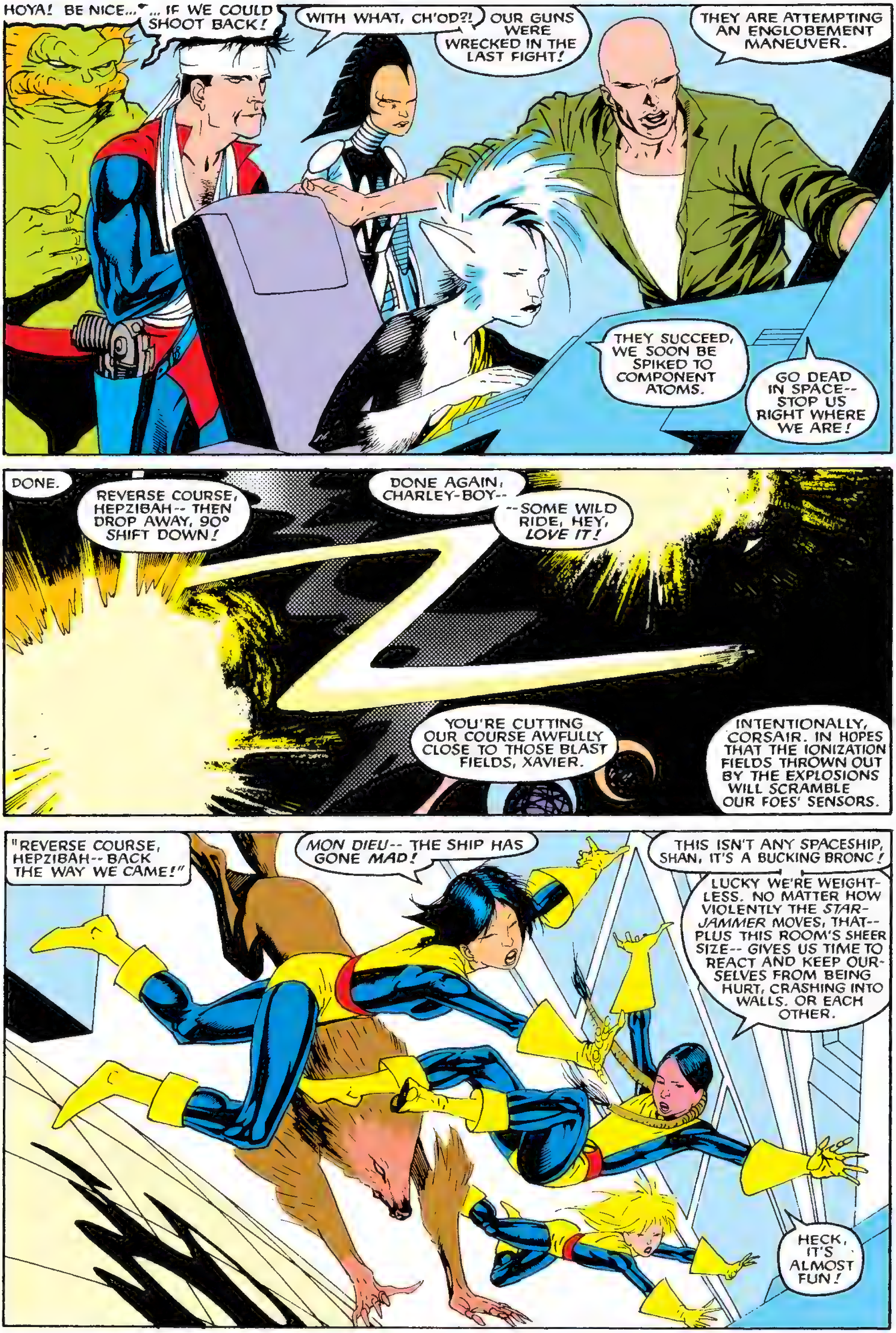

THE BRIDGE...
REPAIRS PROCEED FASTER THAN EXPECTED. THE SOONER WE FINISH, THE SOONER CHARLES WILL DEPART.
IF HE GOES, I KNOW I WILL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.
WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MADPLACE IF STAYED WE HAD WITH *TRUE* CALLING.
GIVE IT A REST, HEPZIBAH.
DEFEND FEATHERHEAD, RAZA, WHETHER WRONG OR RIGHT-- BECAUSE YOU AND SHE BLOOD-KIN!
PRIVATEERS WE ARE-- FREEBOOTERS-- NOT REBELS...
...IN A *HOPELESS* CAUSE.
WOULD YOU RATHER SEE MY SISTER ON THE THRONE? REMEMBER, HEPZIBAH, SHE IS NOT CALLED "*DEATHBIRD*" FOR NOTHING!
COULDN'T CARE LESS, I.
IMPERIUM HAS RULER IT DESERVES.
IF LILANDRA WANTS THRONE, ONLY PROVES SHE JUST AS CRAZED AS SISTER.
ROTLUCK BEEN OURS FULL MEASURE SINCE YOU JOINED
POW
I AM *DONE* WITH YOUR SNIPING, WOMAN, AND YOUR HATE! I HAD NO PART IN THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR WORLD!
PAX, THE PAIR OF YOU!
HATE, IF YOU MUST, FOR WHAT I *AM*--
--NOT FOR WHAT YOU THINK I REPRESENT.
PROFESSOR X-- !
INTERCOM HOLOGRAM PROJECTION-- *WOLFSBANE!*
TROUBLE, SIR-- COME QUICKLY!

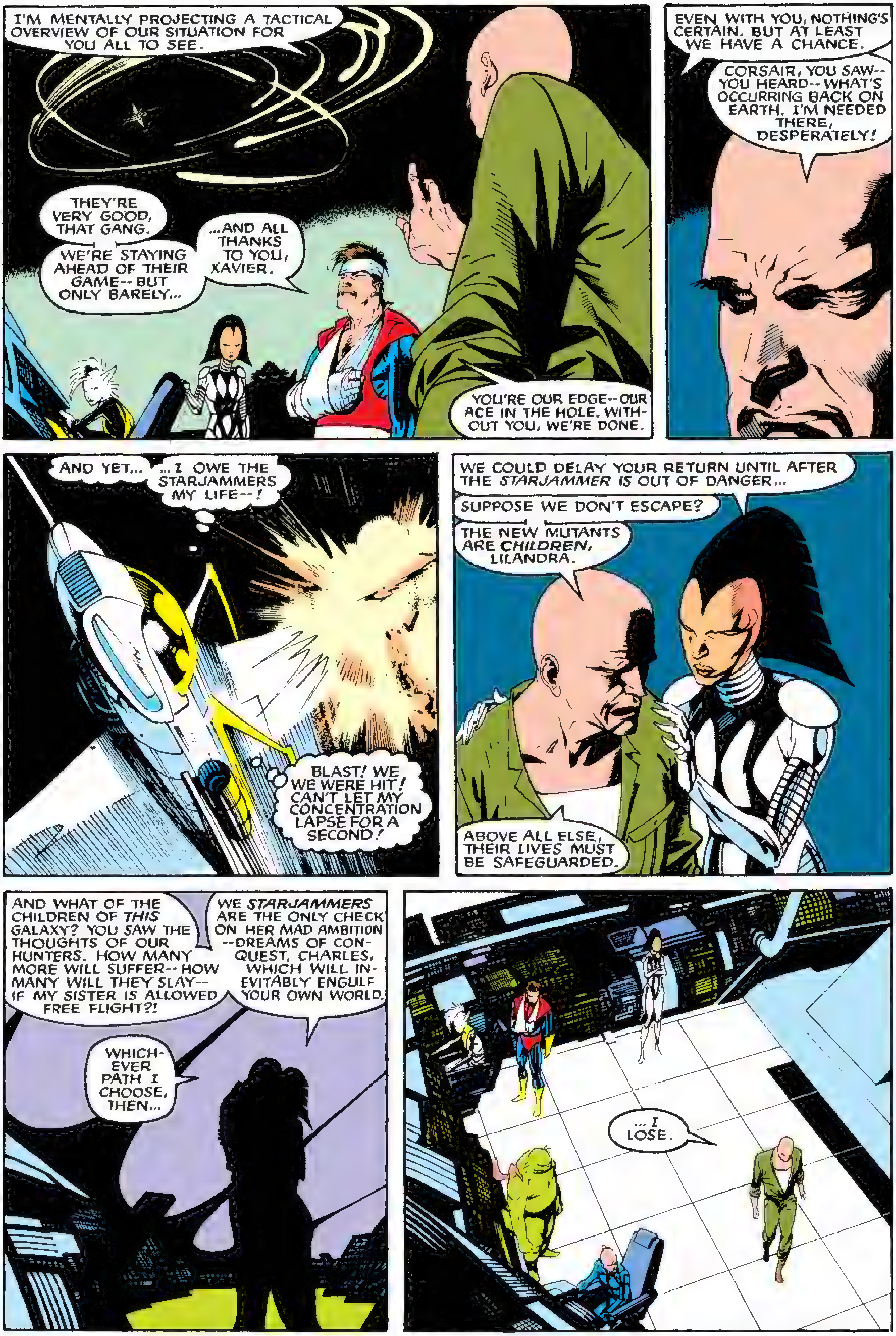

WHAT'S THE MATTER, RAHNE?!
CALM YOURSELF, CHILD. YOUR THOUGHTS ARE TOO WILD AND CHAOTIC FOR ME TO READ!
Oh, PROFESSOR-- THANK HEAVEN--
-- IT'S ILLYANA-- I FEAR IT'S MY FAULT, ONLY I DINNA KNOW WHAT IT WAS I DID--
--NATTERING, I WAS, LIKE A WEE SILLY, ABOUT HOW GOOD IT'LL BE TO RETURN HOME, EVEN THOUGH WE'LL HAVE TO TRAVEL THROUGH ILLYANA'S REALM OF LIMBO TO GET THERE...
...WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, ILLYANA GOT TERRIBLY UPSET AN' LOCKED HERSELF IN HER ROOM!
SHE WON'T OPEN THE DOOR-- OR EVEN ANSWER ME-- NO MATTER HOW HARD I CALL!
LET ME TRY, THEN.
ILLYANA...
... IT'S PROFESSOR XAVIER...
GO AWAY!
GET OUT OF MY HEAD AND LEAVE ME ALONE--
--OR I'LL TELEPORT MYSELF TO LIMBO, I MEAN IT...
...AND LEAVE YOU ALL BEHIND! FOREVER!!
I'VE NEVER HEARD HER PANICKED. OR HYSTERICAL.
THIS IS BAD, SIR. I THINK SHE'S SERIOUS.
WE CANNOT LET HER STRAND US, MES AMIS.
AND WE WILL NOT.
KARMA, I'LL GIVE YOU ENTRY TO ILLYANA'S MIND, SO YOU CAN "POSSESS" HER AND MAKE HER UNLOCK THE DOOR.
PROFESSOR, NO! THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY--!
WITH RESPECT, MIRAGE, WHILE YOU ARE CO-LEADER OF THE NEW MUTANTS, I AM YOUR TEACHER.
I BELIEVE I KNOW BEST.
KARMA, IF YOU PLEASE--?
I... HAVE HER, M'SIEU.

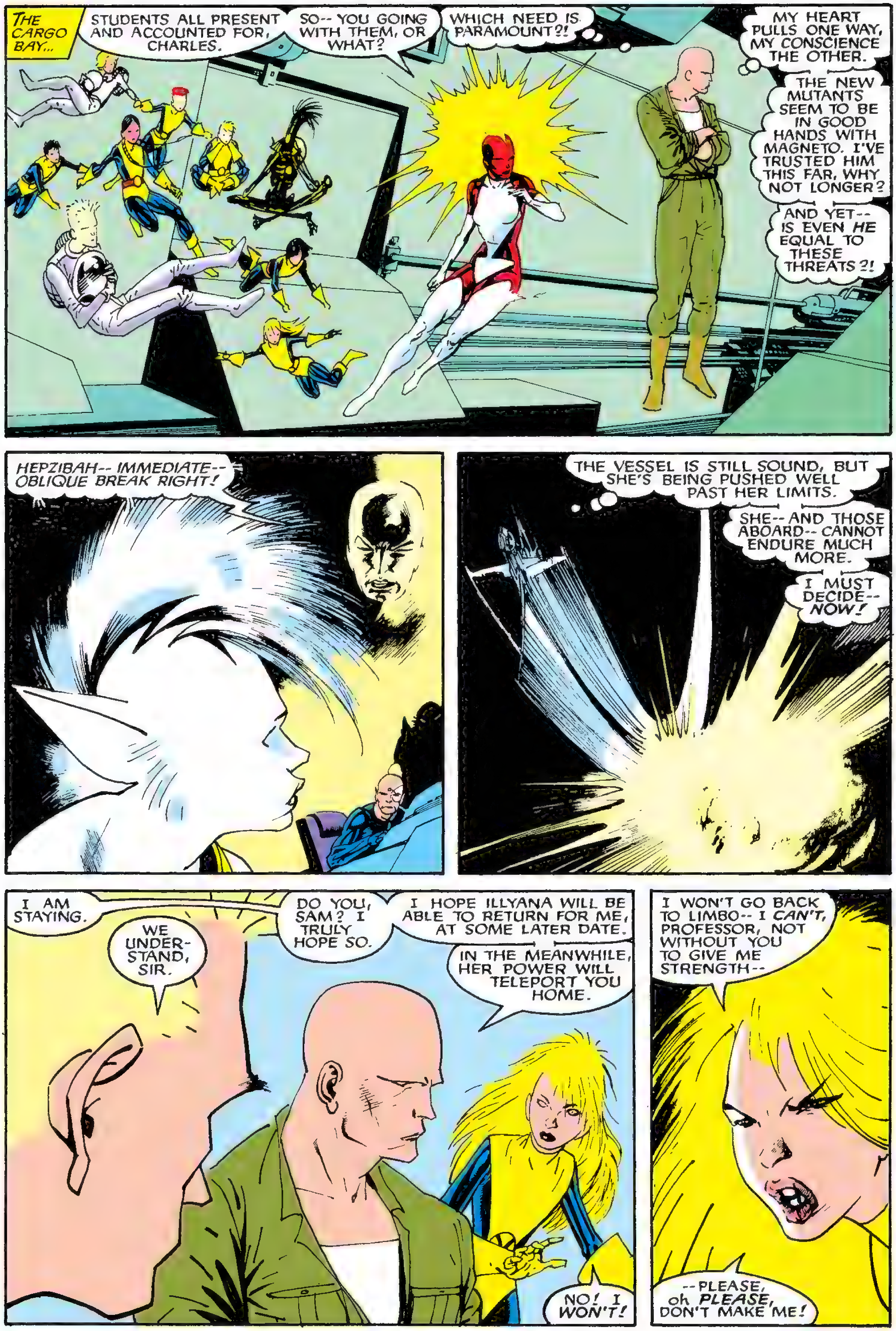

CLICK
SHE'S OUT! NOW LET HER GO!
IN A MOMENT.
KARMA'S POWER OF POSSESSION ALLOWS HER TO TAP INTO THE MEMORIES OF HER SUBJECTS-- WHICH, IN TURN, PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN WHAT PROMPTED THIS OUTBURST, WITHOUT HAVING ILLYANA RESIST MY PROBES OR QUESTIONS.
I... DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO LIMBO.
THE DARKSIDE OF MY SELF IS THERE-- THE PART OF ME THAT'S EVIL.
HERE, ON THE STARJAMMER, I'M FREE-- THE GIRL I COULD HAVE BEEN, SHOULD HAVE BEEN--
--I WANT TO STAY AND BE NORMAL AND HAPPY. IS THAT SO MUCH TO ASK?!!
SATISFIED!?!
GOT YOUR LOUSY POUND OF FLESH?!!
DO NOT TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, MIRAGE.
THIS WASN'T NECESSARY, PROFESSOR!
Whua--?
HOW'D I GET--
--KARMA, WHAT DID YOU MAKE ME DO?!
YOU GOT YOUR ANSWERS, PROFESSOR.
WERE THEY WORTH THE PAIN?!
SHE'S RIGHT. I TRAINED HER TO THINK THAT WAY. BUT I MUST EXPLAIN MYSELF...

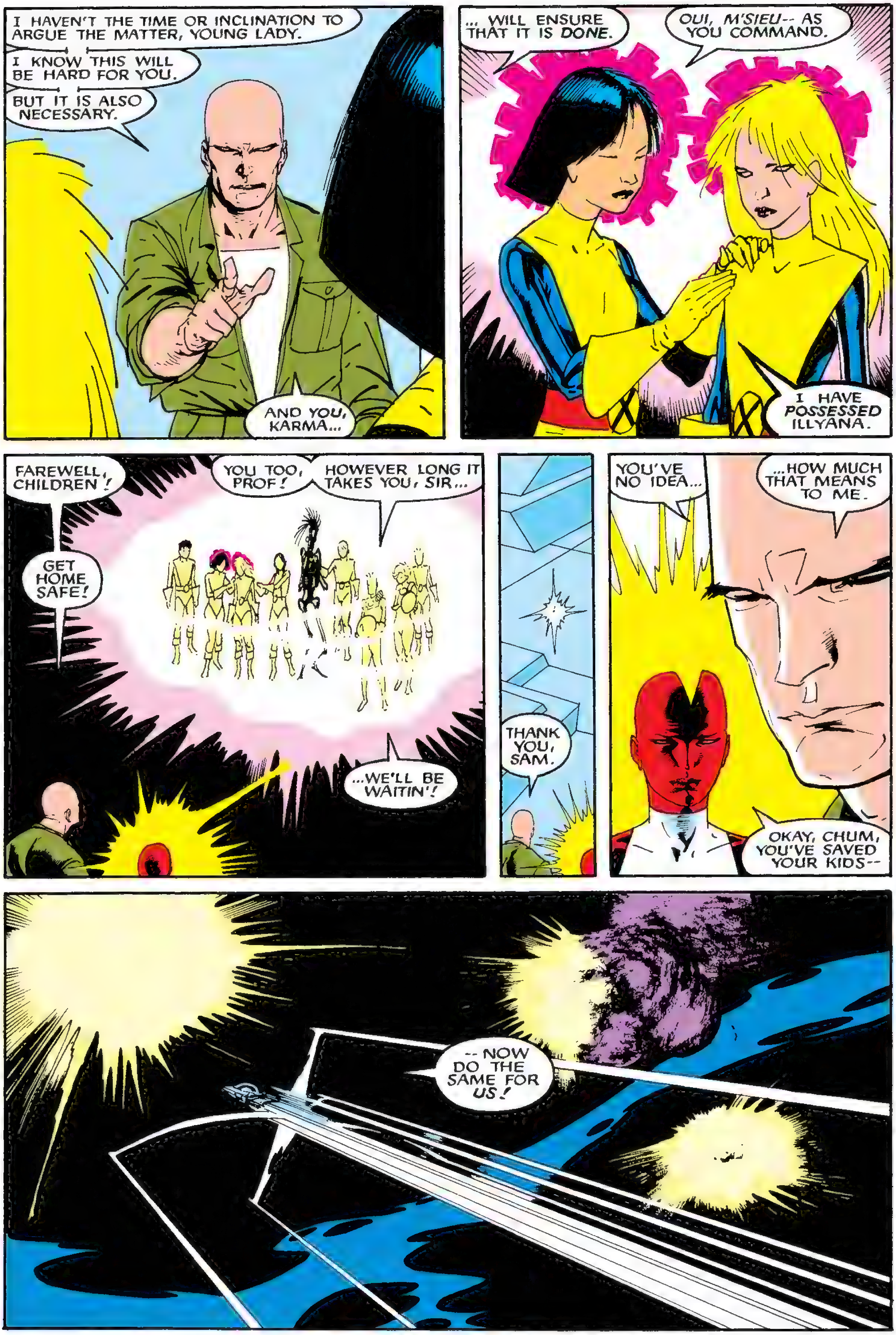

WOULD YOU RATHER BE TRAPPED HERE, MIRAGE--
--POSSIBLY FOR THE REST OF--
--BY THE ETERNAL!?!
CANNONBALL--RETURN TO THE SHIP--AT ONCE!
PROFESSOR?! WHAT--?!?
DO NOT QUESTION, BOY--AND DO NOT DELAY!
BINARY--
YAH?
--MAKE SURE THE CHILDREN GET INSIDE SAFELY!
HEPZIBAH--IGNITE MAIN ENGINES, FULL EMERGENCY THRUST!
AND ACTIVATE THE DEFENSIVE SHIELDS, MAXIMUM STRENGTH!
DONE, CHARLEY-BOY.
WE MOVING.
QUERY, WHY?
SCAN-SCOPES ALL CLEAN. NO CONTACTS, NO...
...DANGER.
MY EYES!
HELMET COMPENSATORS BARELY HANDLING THE ACTINIC LOAD.
HOPE MY SUIT DOES BETTER AGAINST THE RADIATION--
--'CAUSE THAT WAS A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION!

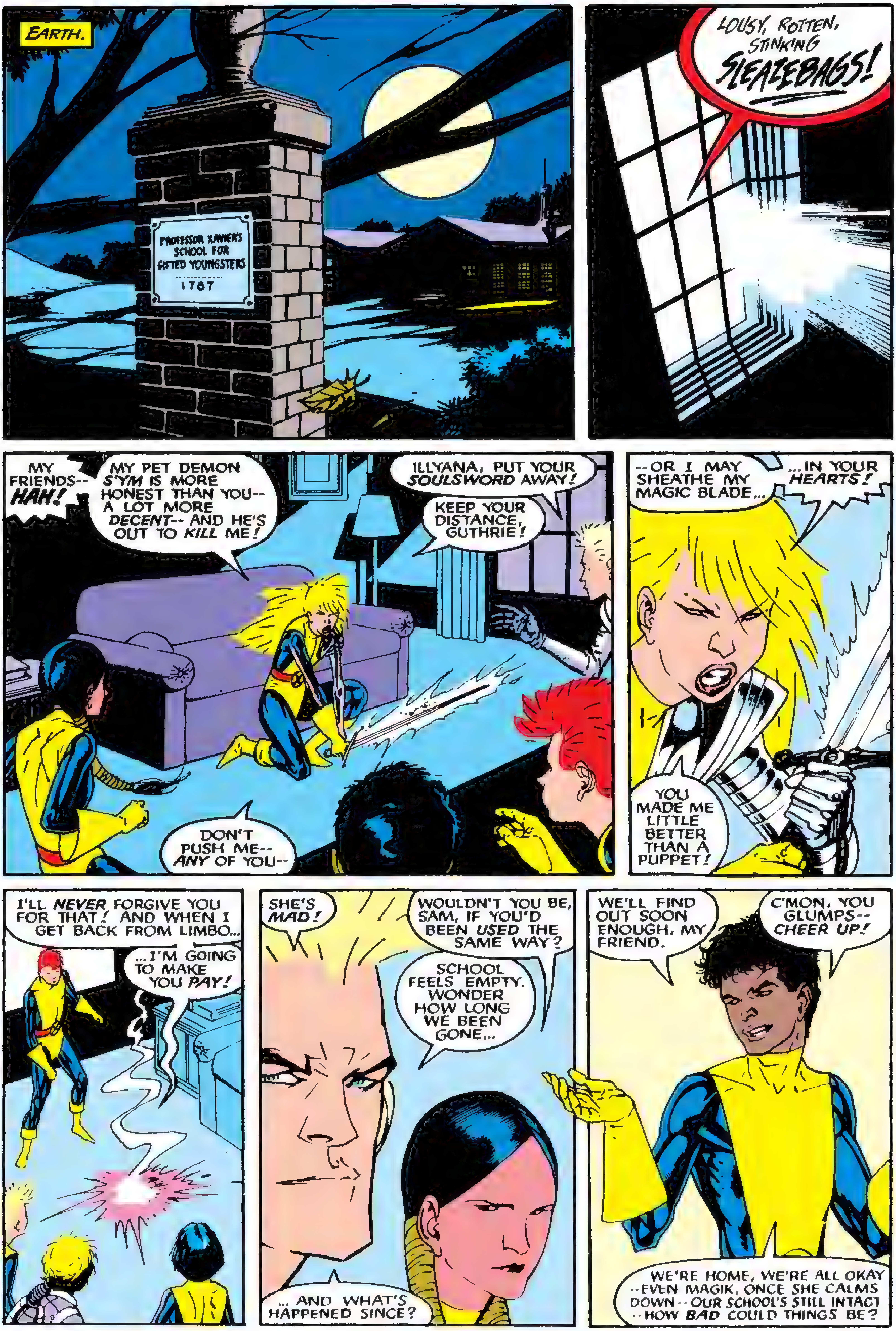

NO TIME TO DAWDLE, SPROUT-SPRATS.
GETTING A MITE UNHEALTHY OUT HERE.
IF THE PROF HADN'T WARNED US--
--BUT, BINARY, HOW'D HE KNOW?!!
NO RESPONSE, ALL SENSORS-- LOCAL SPACE CLEAN.
YET WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
TWELVE VESSELS-- A SHI'AR FAST HUNTER GROUP-- USING ELECTRONIC CLOAKS TO MASK THEIR PRESENCE FROM YOUR SENSORS.
FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, THEY CANNOT HIDE THEIR THOUGHTS FROM ME!
I SENSED THEIR COMMANDER'S ORDER TO FIRE.
THEIR EXCITEMENT-- THEIR LUST FOR THE KILL-- LOWERS THEIR NATURAL PSI-RESISTANCE AND GIVES ME EASIER ACCESS TO THEIR MINDS.
HARD LEFT, HEPZIBAH--
--CLIMBING TURN!
WAIAOHHWWW!
INERTIA'S PITCHIN' ME TOWARDS THE HATCH--
--NOTHIN' TO GRAB ONTO, TO STOP MYSELF--
--SUIT THRUSTER'S OUTTA GAS--
--AH'M A GONER!
NOT WHILE BINARY'S AROUND, SMALL FRY.
HANG ON TIGHT, THE LOT OF YOU!
I THINK WE'RE IN FOR A ROYALLY ROUGH RIDE!
SHH!

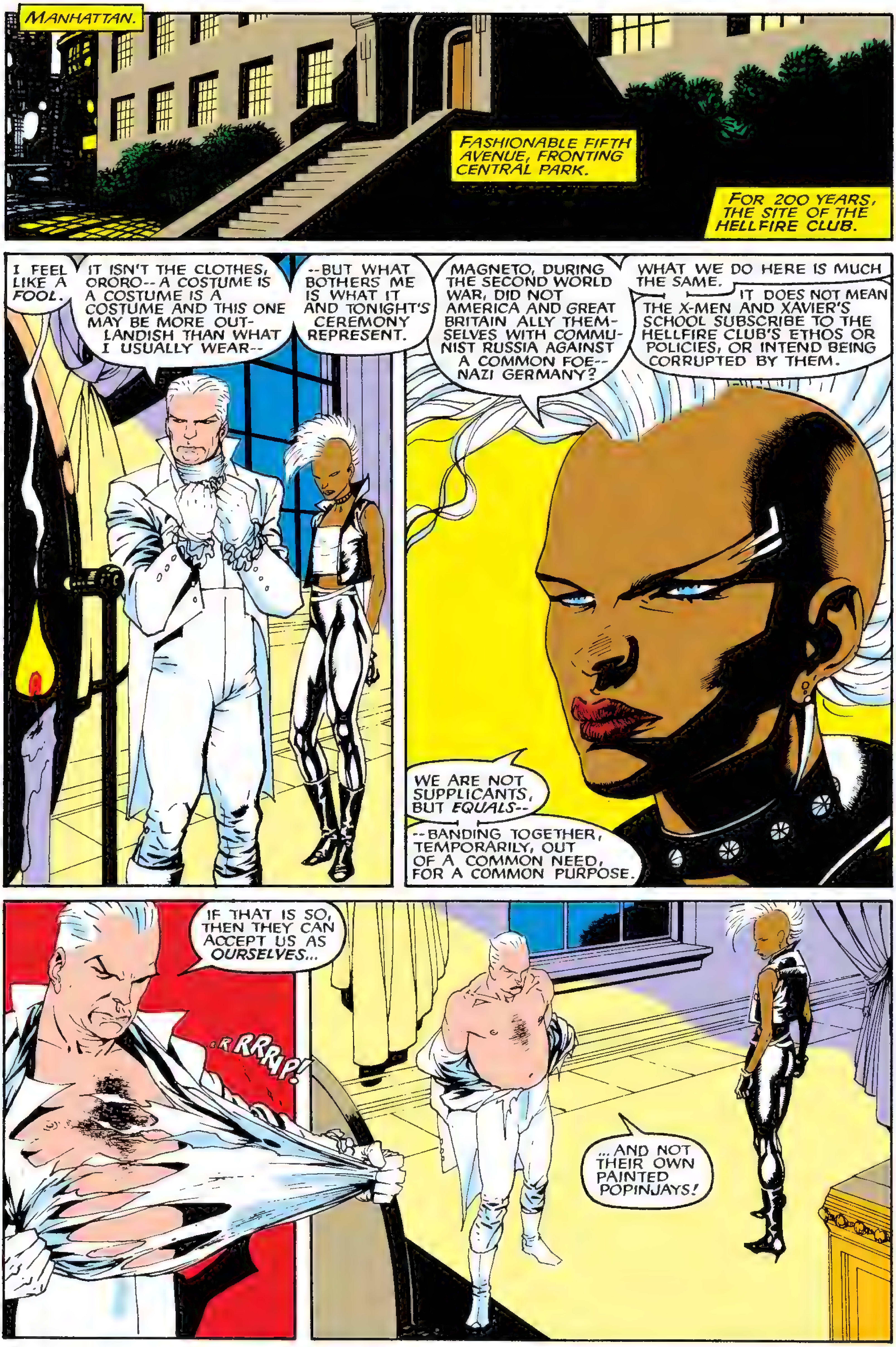

HOYA! BE NICE... ...IF WE COULD SHOOT BACK!
WITH WHAT, CH'OD?! OUR GUNS WERE WRECKED IN THE LAST FIGHT!
THEY ARE ATTEMPTING AN ENGLOBEMENT MANEUVER.
THEY SUCCEED, WE SOON BE SPIKED TO COMPONENT ATOMS.
GO DEAD IN SPACE-- STOP US RIGHT WHERE WE ARE!
DONE.
REVERSE COURSE, HEPZIBAH-- THEN DROP AWAY, 90° SHIFT DOWN!
DONE AGAIN, CHARLEY-BOY--
--SOME WILD RIDE, HEY, LOVE IT!
YOU'RE CUTTING OUR COURSE AWFULLY CLOSE TO THOSE BLAST FIELDS, XAVIER.
INTENTIONALLY, CORSAIR. IN HOPES THAT THE IONIZATION FIELDS THROWN OUT BY THE EXPLOSIONS WILL SCRAMBLE OUR FOES' SENSORS.
"REVERSE COURSE, HEPZIBAH-- BACK THE WAY WE CAME!"
MON DIEU-- THE SHIP HAS GONE MAD!
THIS ISN'T ANY SPACESHIP, SHAN, IT'S A BUCKING BRONC!
LUCKY WE'RE WEIGHTLESS. NO MATTER HOW VIOLENTLY THE STARJAMMER MOVES, THAT-- PLUS THIS ROOM'S SHEER SIZE-- GIVES US TIME TO REACT AND KEEP OURSELVES FROM BEING HURT, CRASHING INTO WALLS, OR EACH OTHER.
HECK, IT'S ALMOST FUN!

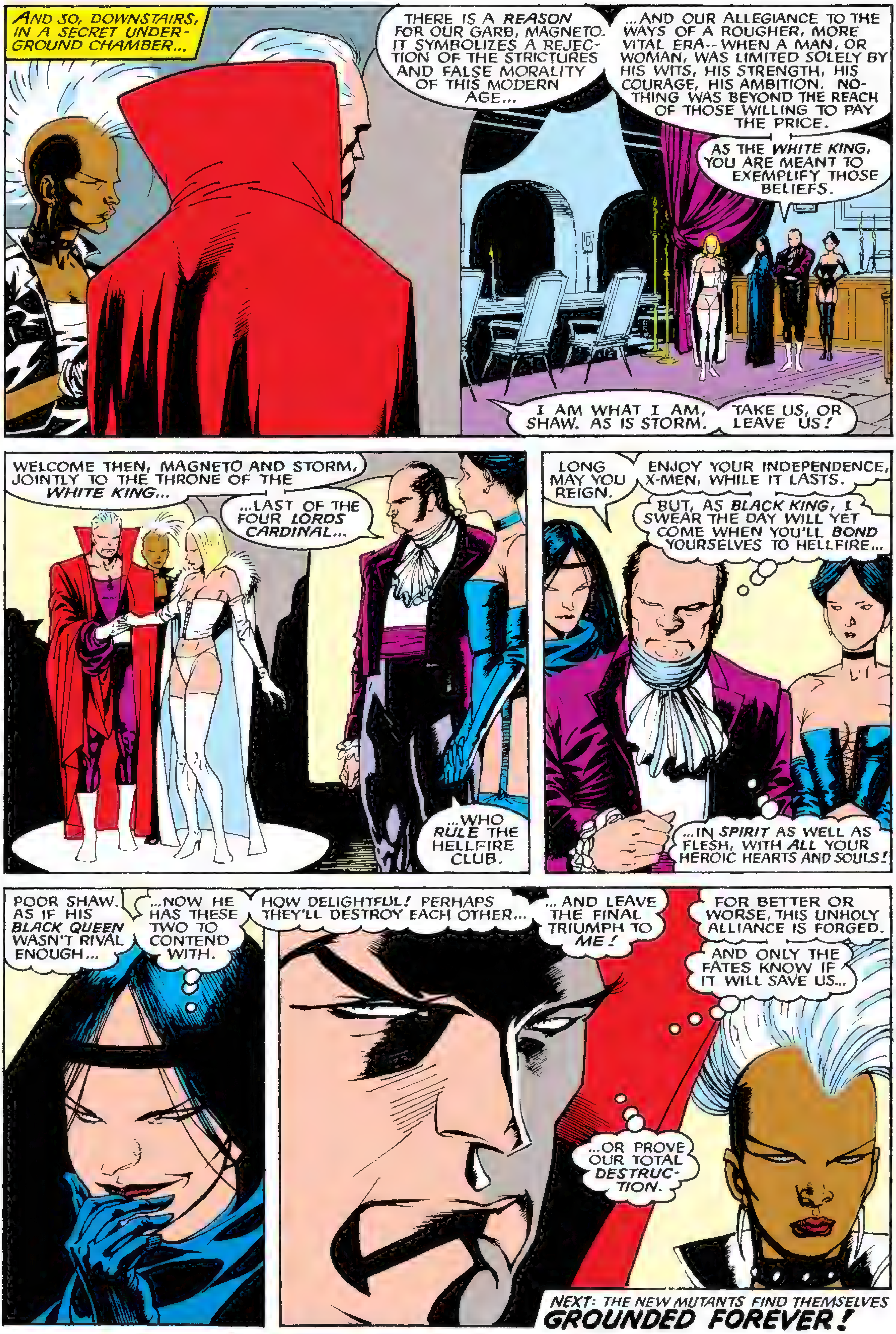

I'M MENTALLY PROJECTING A TACTICAL OVERVIEW OF OUR SITUATION FOR YOU ALL TO SEE.
THEY'RE VERY GOOD, THAT GANG.
WE'RE STAYING AHEAD OF THEIR GAME--BUT ONLY BARELY...
...AND ALL THANKS TO YOU, XAVIER.
YOU'RE OUR EDGE--OUR ACE IN THE HOLE. WITHOUT YOU, WE'RE DONE.
EVEN WITH YOU, NOTHING'S CERTAIN. BUT AT LEAST WE HAVE A CHANCE.
CORSAIR, YOU SAW--YOU HEARD--WHAT'S OCCURRING BACK ON EARTH. I'M NEEDED THERE, DESPERATELY!
AND YET...
...I OWE THE STARJAMMERS MY LIFE--!
BLAST! WE, WE WERE HIT! CAN'T LET MY CONCENTRATION LAPSE FOR A SECOND!
WE COULD DELAY YOUR RETURN UNTIL AFTER THE *STARJAMMER* IS OUT OF DANGER...
SUPPOSE WE DON'T ESCAPE?
THE NEW MUTANTS ARE *CHILDREN*, LILANDRA.
ABOVE ALL ELSE, THEIR LIVES MUST BE SAFEGUARDED.
AND WHAT OF THE CHILDREN OF *THIS* GALAXY? YOU SAW THE THOUGHTS OF OUR HUNTERS. HOW MANY MORE WILL SUFFER--HOW MANY WILL THEY SLAY--IF MY SISTER IS ALLOWED FREE FLIGHT?!
WE *STARJAMMERS* ARE THE ONLY CHECK ON HER MAD AMBITION--DREAMS OF CONQUEST, CHARLES, WHICH WILL INEVITABLY ENGULF YOUR OWN WORLD.
WHICHEVER PATH I CHOOSE, THEN...
...I LOSE.


THE CARGO BAY...
STUDENTS ALL PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR, CHARLES.
SO-- YOU GOING WITH THEM, OR WHAT?
WHICH NEED IS PARAMOUNT?!
MY HEART PULLS ONE WAY, MY CONSCIENCE THE OTHER.
THE NEW MUTANTS SEEM TO BE IN GOOD HANDS WITH MAGNETO. I'VE TRUSTED HIM THIS FAR, WHY NOT LONGER?
AND YET-- IS EVEN *HE* EQUAL TO THESE THREATS?!
HEPZIBAH-- IMMEDIATE-- OBLIQUE BREAK RIGHT!
THE VESSEL IS STILL SOUND, BUT SHE'S BEING PUSHED WELL PAST HER LIMITS.
SHE-- AND THOSE ABOARD-- CANNOT ENDURE MUCH MORE.
I MUST DECIDE-- *NOW!*
I AM STAYING.
WE UNDERSTAND, SIR.
DO YOU, SAM? I TRULY HOPE SO.
I HOPE ILLYANA WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN FOR ME, AT SOME LATER DATE.
IN THE MEANWHILE, HER POWER WILL TELEPORT YOU HOME.
NO! I WON'T!
I WON'T GO BACK TO LIMBO-- I *CAN'T,* PROFESSOR, NOT WITHOUT YOU TO GIVE ME STRENGTH--
--PLEASE, oh *PLEASE,* DON'T MAKE ME!


I HAVEN'T THE TIME OR INCLINATION TO ARGUE THE MATTER, YOUNG LADY.
I KNOW THIS WILL BE HARD FOR YOU.
BUT IT IS ALSO NECESSARY.
AND YOU, KARMA...
... WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS DONE.
OUI, M'SIEU-- AS YOU COMMAND.
I HAVE POSSESSED ILLYANA.
FAREWELL, CHILDREN!
GET HOME SAFE!
YOU TOO, PROF!
HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES YOU, SIR...
...WE'LL BE WAITIN'!
THANK YOU, SAM.
YOU'VE NO IDEA...
...HOW MUCH THAT MEANS TO ME.
OKAY, CHUM, YOU'VE SAVED YOUR KIDS--
-- NOW DO THE SAME FOR US!


EARTH.
PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS 1787
LOUSY, ROTTEN, STINKING SLEAZEBAGS!
MY FRIENDS-- HAH!
MY PET DEMON S'YM IS MORE HONEST THAN YOU-- A LOT MORE DECENT-- AND HE'S OUT TO KILL ME!
ILLYANA, PUT YOUR SOULSWORD AWAY!
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, GUTHRIE!
DON'T PUSH ME-- ANY OF YOU--
--OR I MAY SHEATHE MY MAGIC BLADE...
...IN YOUR HEARTS!
YOU MADE ME LITTLE BETTER THAN A PUPPET!
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THAT! AND WHEN I GET BACK FROM LIMBO...
...I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY!
SHE'S MAD!
WOULDN'T YOU BE, SAM, IF YOU'D BEEN USED THE SAME WAY?
SCHOOL FEELS EMPTY. WONDER HOW LONG WE BEEN GONE...
... AND WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE?
WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH, MY FRIEND.
C'MON, YOU GLUMPS-- CHEER UP!
WE'RE HOME, WE'RE ALL OKAY --EVEN MAGIK, ONCE SHE CALMS DOWN--OUR SCHOOL'S STILL INTACT --HOW BAD COULD THINGS BE?


MANHATTAN.
FASHIONABLE FIFTH AVENUE, FRONTING CENTRAL PARK.
FOR 200 YEARS, THE SITE OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
I FEEL LIKE A FOOL.
IT ISN'T THE CLOTHES, ORORO-- A COSTUME IS A COSTUME AND THIS ONE MAY BE MORE OUTLANDISH THAN WHAT I USUALLY WEAR--
--BUT WHAT BOTHERS ME IS WHAT IT AND TONIGHT'S CEREMONY REPRESENT.
MAGNETO, DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, DID NOT AMERICA AND GREAT BRITAIN ALLY THEMSELVES WITH COMMUNIST RUSSIA AGAINST A COMMON FOE-- NAZI GERMANY?
WHAT WE DO HERE IS MUCH THE SAME.
IT DOES NOT MEAN THE X-MEN AND XAVIER'S SCHOOL SUBSCRIBE TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S ETHOS OR POLICIES, OR INTEND BEING CORRUPTED BY THEM.
WE ARE NOT SUPPLICANTS, BUT *EQUALS*--
--BANDING TOGETHER, TEMPORARILY, OUT OF A COMMON NEED, FOR A COMMON PURPOSE.
IF THAT IS SO, THEN THEY CAN ACCEPT US AS *OURSELVES*...
RRRRIP!
...AND NOT THEIR OWN PAINTED POPINJAYS!


AND SO, DOWNSTAIRS, IN A SECRET UNDERGROUND CHAMBER...
THERE IS A REASON FOR OUR GARB, MAGNETO. IT SYMBOLIZES A REJECTION OF THE STRICTURES AND FALSE MORALITY OF THIS MODERN AGE...
...AND OUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE WAYS OF A ROUGHER, MORE VITAL ERA-- WHEN A MAN, OR WOMAN, WAS LIMITED SOLELY BY HIS WITS, HIS STRENGTH, HIS COURAGE, HIS AMBITION. NOTHING WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF THOSE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE.
AS THE WHITE KING, YOU ARE MEANT TO EXEMPLIFY THOSE BELIEFS.
I AM WHAT I AM, SHAW. AS IS STORM.
TAKE US, OR LEAVE US!
WELCOME THEN, MAGNETO AND STORM, JOINTLY TO THE THRONE OF THE WHITE KING...
...LAST OF THE FOUR LORDS CARDINAL...
...WHO RULE THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
LONG MAY YOU REIGN.
ENJOY YOUR INDEPENDENCE, X-MEN, WHILE IT LASTS.
BUT, AS BLACK KING, I SWEAR THE DAY WILL YET COME WHEN YOU'LL BOND YOURSELVES TO HELLFIRE...
...IN SPIRIT AS WELL AS FLESH, WITH ALL YOUR HEROIC HEARTS AND SOULS!
POOR SHAW. AS IF HIS BLACK QUEEN WASN'T RIVAL ENOUGH...
...NOW HE HAS THESE TWO TO CONTEND WITH.
HOW DELIGHTFUL! PERHAPS THEY'LL DESTROY EACH OTHER...
...AND LEAVE THE FINAL TRIUMPH TO ME!
FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THIS UNHOLY ALLIANCE IS FORGED.
AND ONLY THE FATES KNOW IF IT WILL SAVE US...
...OR PROVE OUR TOTAL DESTRUCTION.
NEXT: THE NEW MUTANTS FIND THEMSELVES GROUNDED FOREVER!

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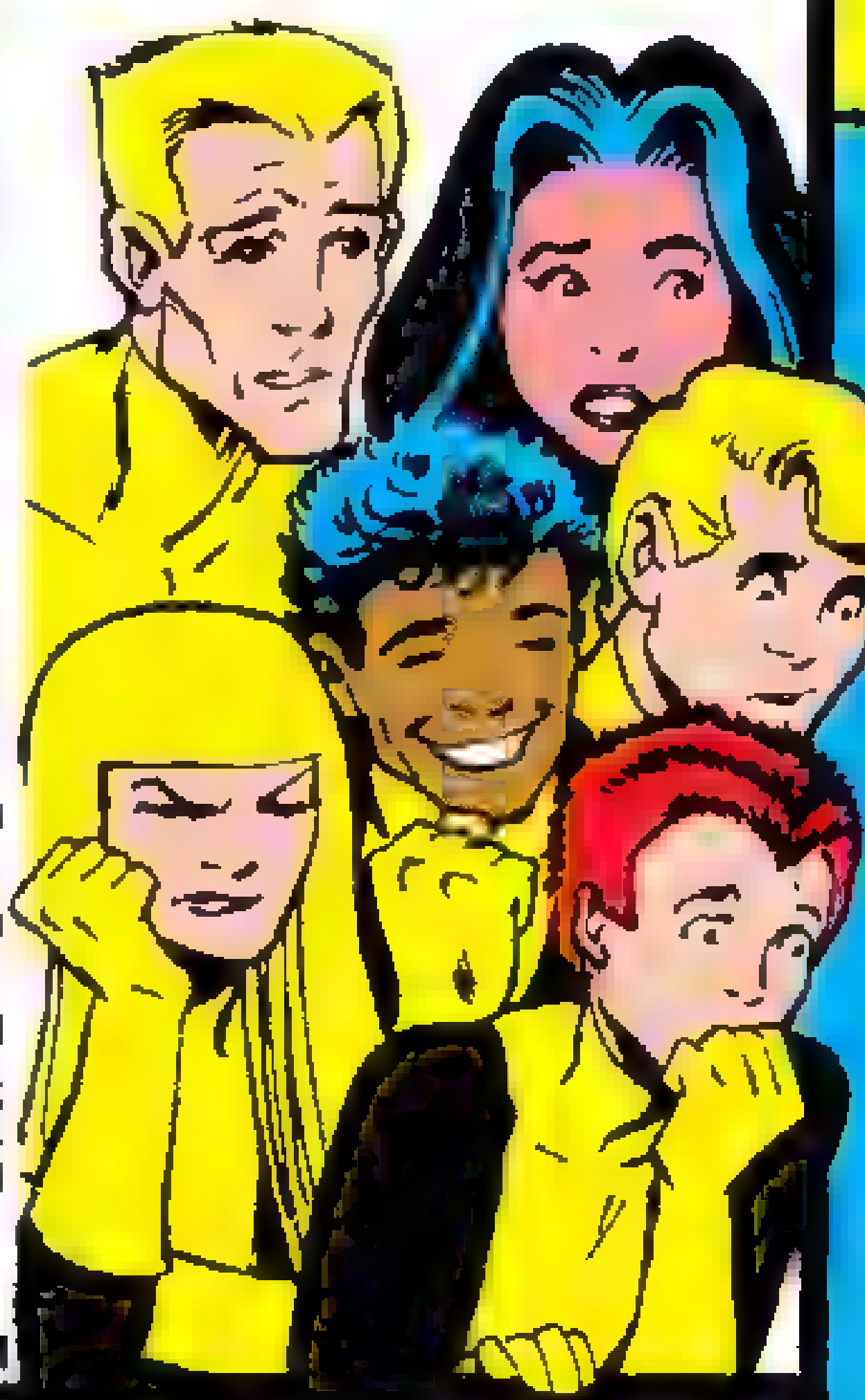

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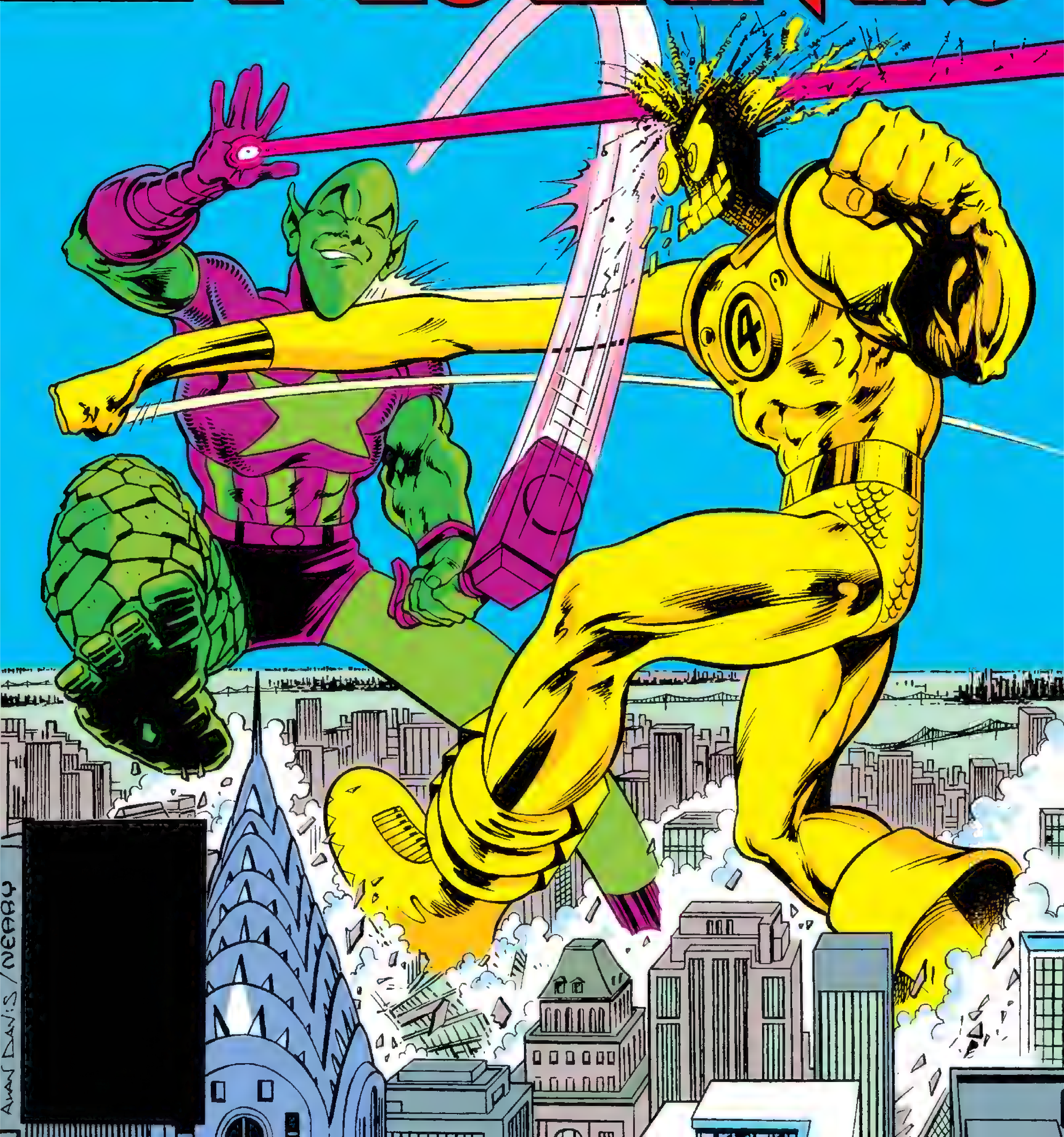
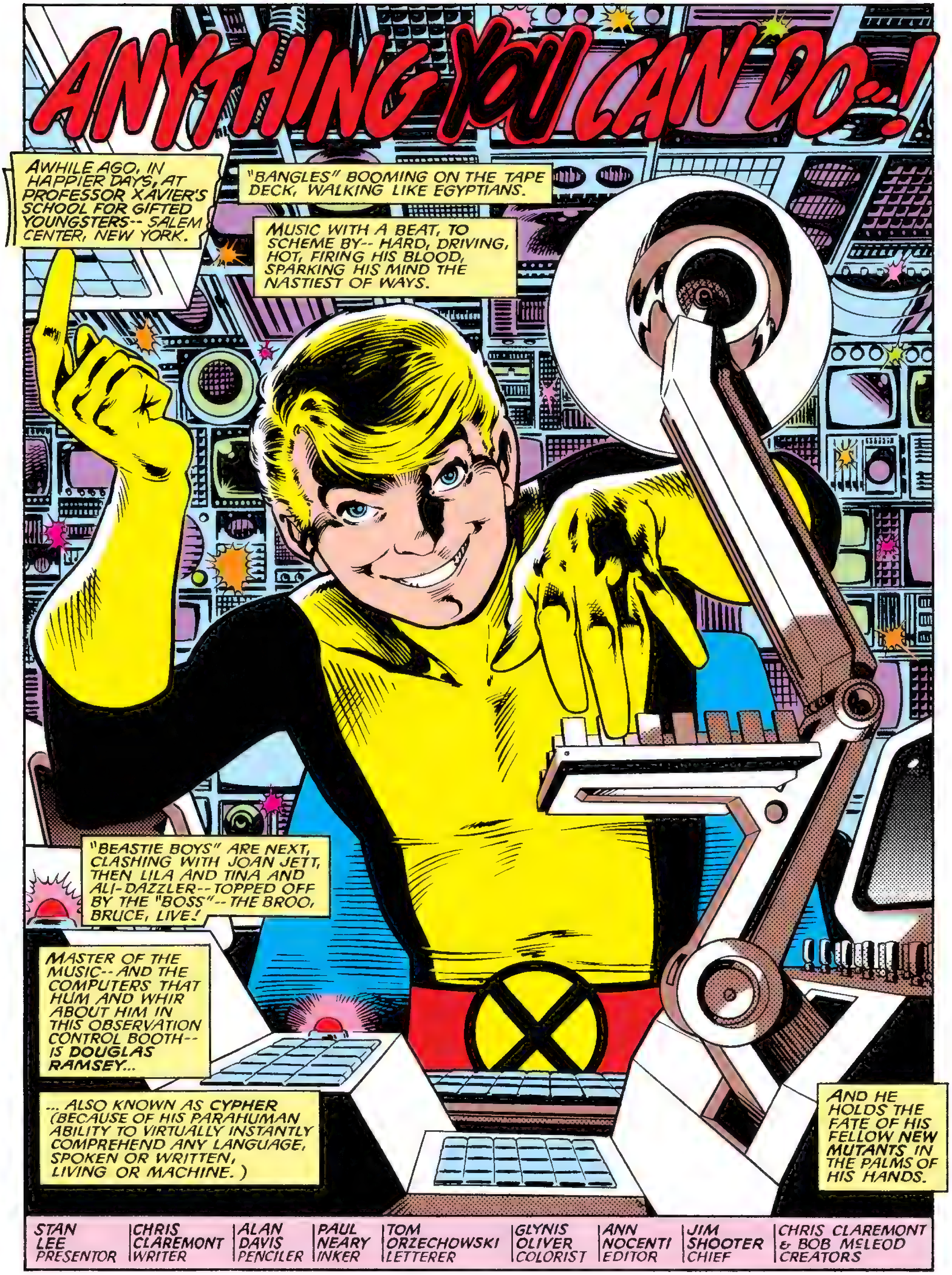
GIANT-SIZED ANNUAL

THE NEW MUTANTS®


ALAN DAVIS/NEARY


ANYTHING YOU CAN DO..!
AWHILE AGO, IN HAPPIER DAYS, AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS-- SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK.
"BANGLES" BOOMING ON THE TAPE DECK, WALKING LIKE EGYPTIANS.
MUSIC WITH A BEAT, TO SCHEME BY-- HARD, DRIVING, HOT, FIRING HIS BLOOD, SPARKING HIS MIND THE NASTIEST OF WAYS.
"BEASTIE BOYS" ARE NEXT, CLASHING WITH JOAN JETT, THEN LILA AND TINA AND ALI-DAZZLER--TOPPED OFF BY THE "BOSS"-- THE BROO, BRUCE, LIVE!
MASTER OF THE MUSIC-- AND THE COMPUTERS THAT HUM AND WHIR ABOUT HIM IN THIS OBSERVATION CONTROL BOOTH-- IS DOUGLAS RAMSEY...
...ALSO KNOWN AS CYPHER (BECAUSE OF HIS PARAHUMAN ABILITY TO VIRTUALLY INSTANTLY COMPREHEND ANY LANGUAGE, SPOKEN OR WRITTEN, LIVING OR MACHINE.)
AND HE HOLDS THE FATE OF HIS FELLOW NEW MUTANTS IN THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS.
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CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
ALAN DAVIS PENCILER
PAUL NEARY INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
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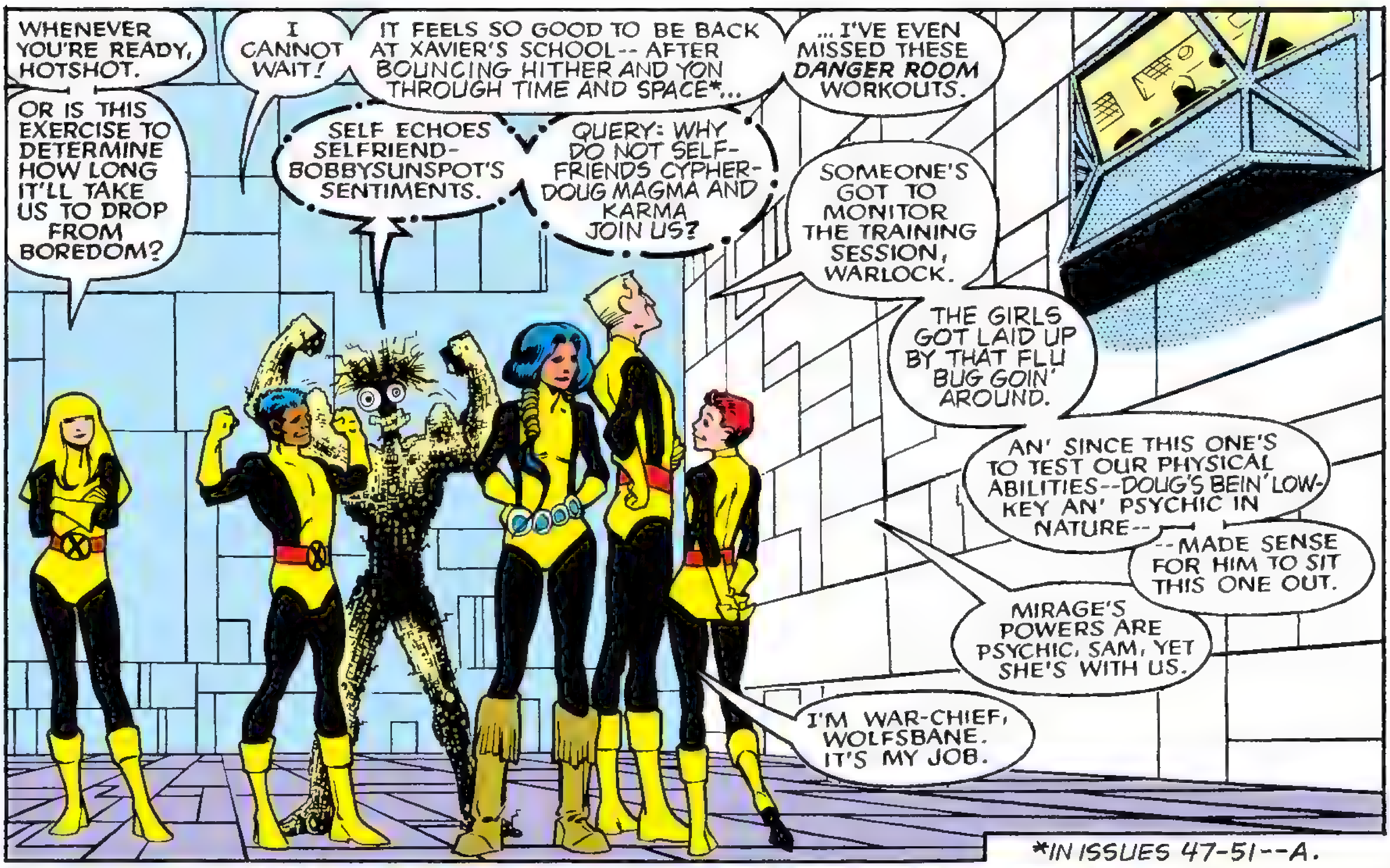
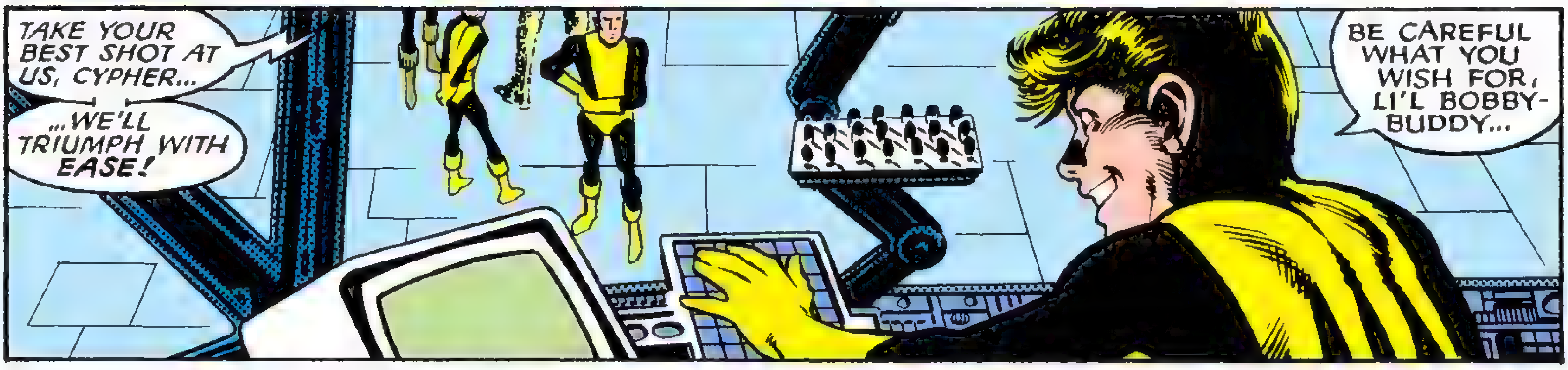
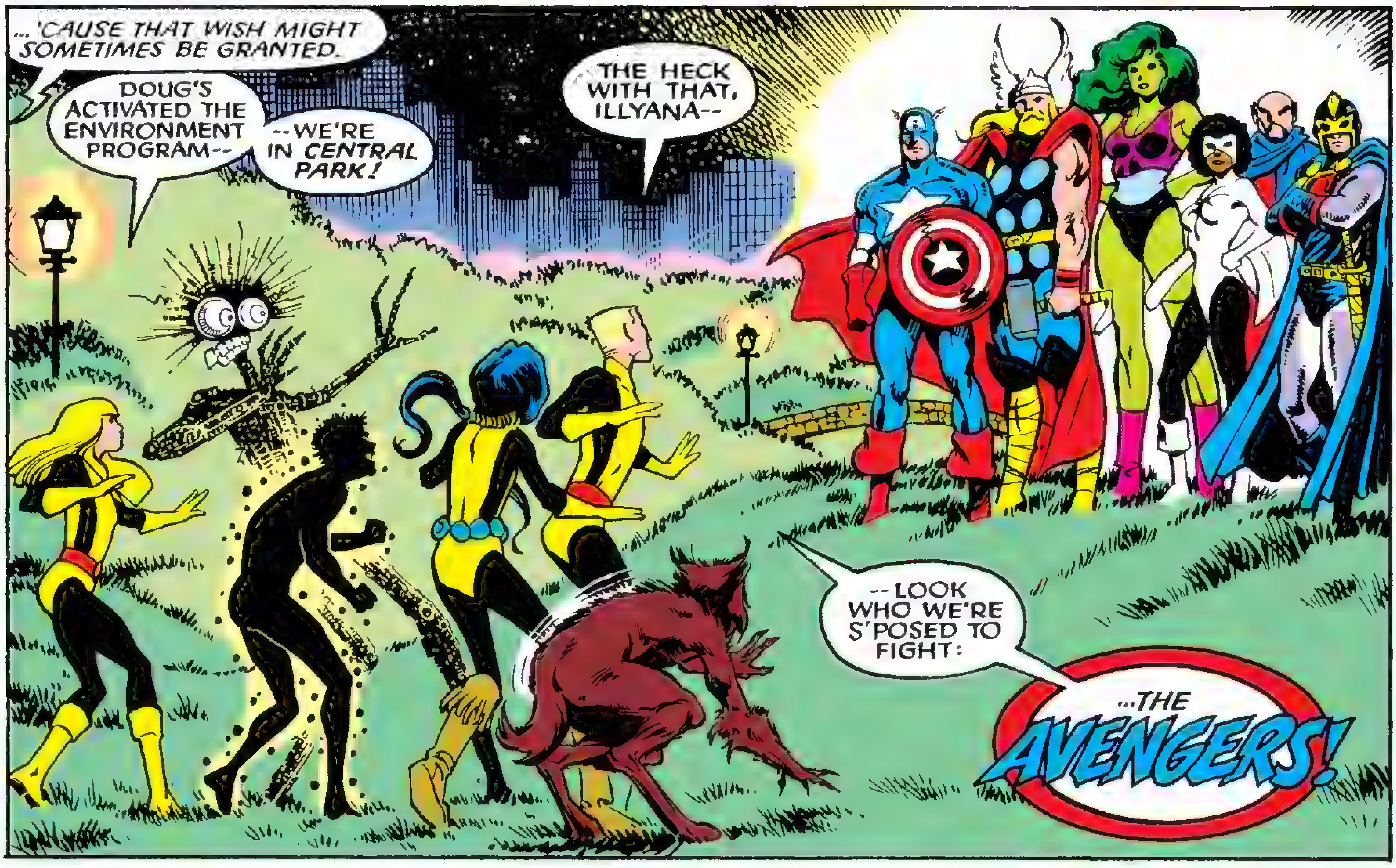
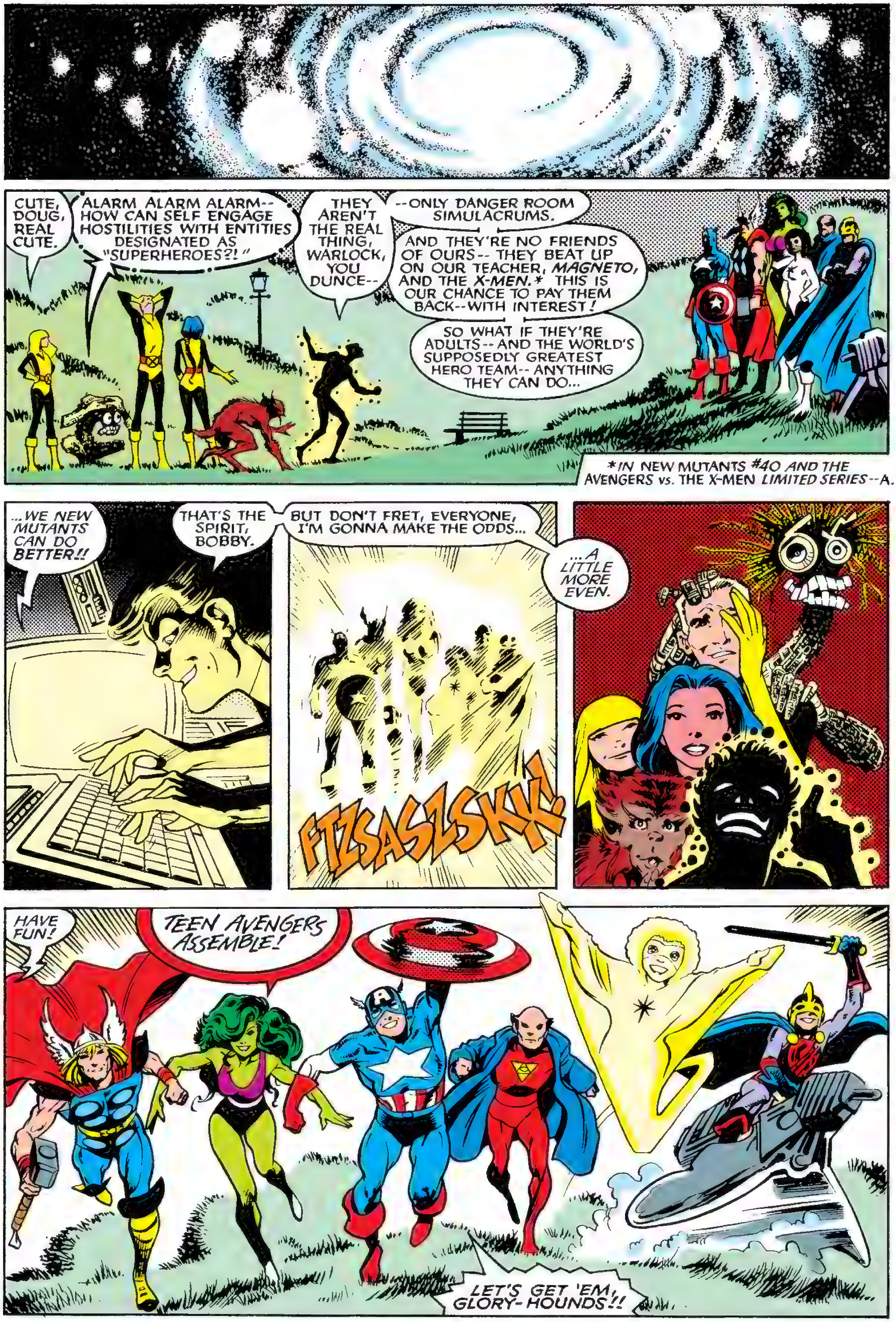
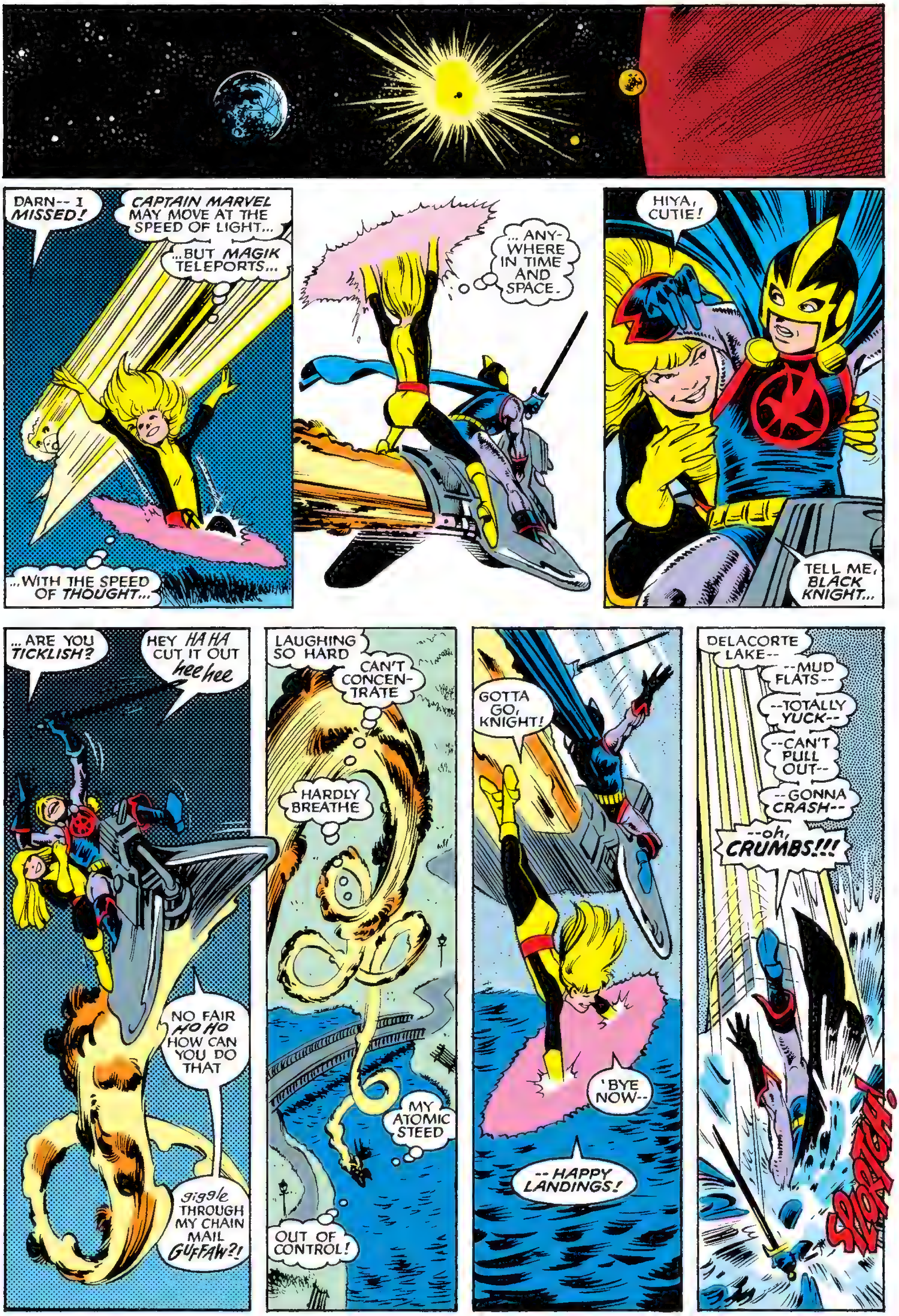
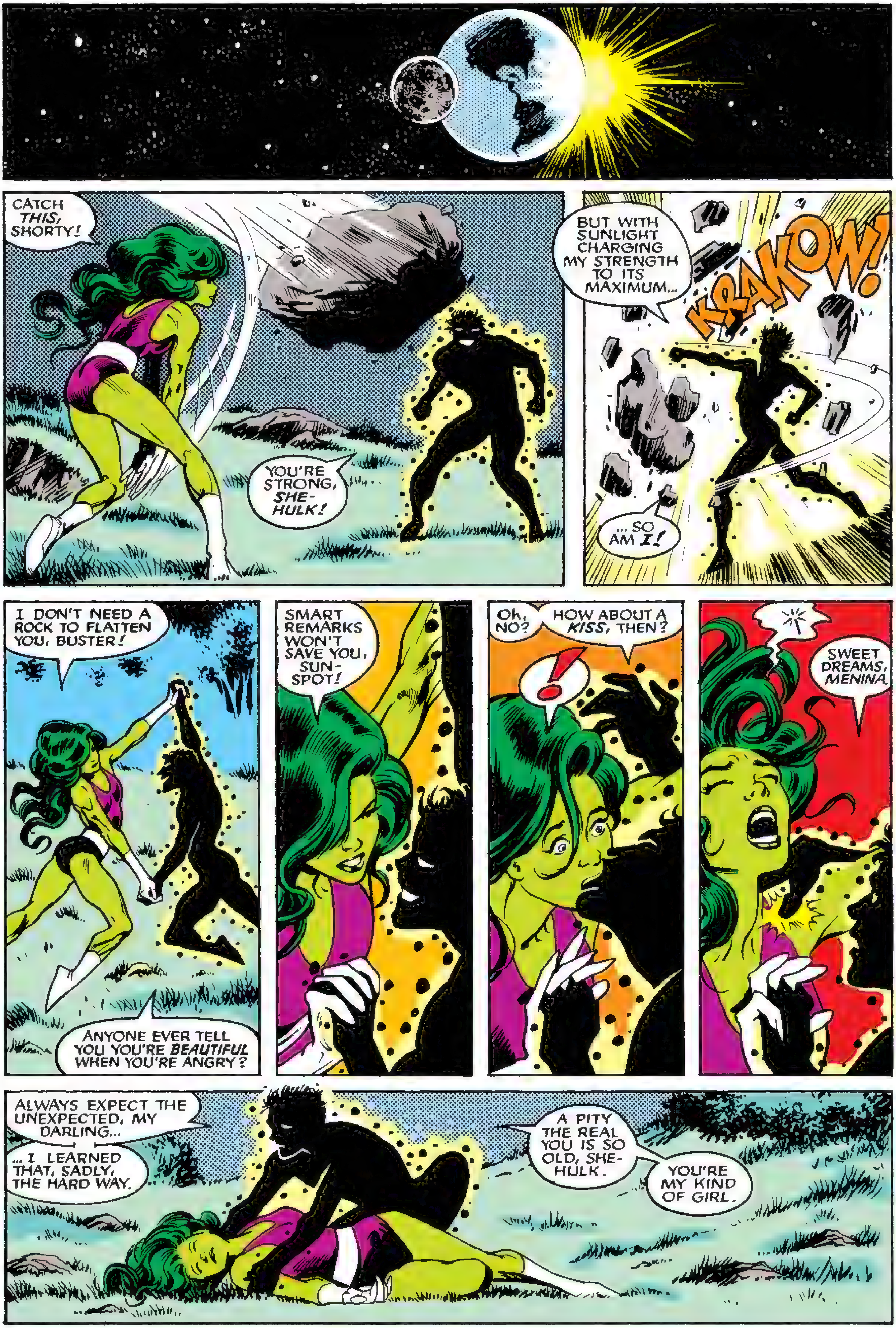

WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, HOTSHOT.
OR IS THIS EXERCISE TO DETERMINE HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE US TO DROP FROM BOREDOM?
I CANNOT WAIT!
IT FEELS SO GOOD TO BE BACK AT XAVIER'S SCHOOL-- AFTER BOUNCING HITHER AND YON THROUGH TIME AND SPACE*...
...I'VE EVEN MISSED THESE DANGER ROOM WORKOUTS.
SELF ECHOES SELFFRIEND-BOBBYSUNSPOT'S SENTIMENTS.
QUERY: WHY DO NOT SELF-FRIENDS CYPHER-DOUG MAGMA AND KARMA JOIN US?
SOMEONE'S GOT TO MONITOR THE TRAINING SESSION, WARLOCK.
THE GIRLS GOT LAID UP BY THAT FLU BUG GOIN' AROUND.
AN' SINCE THIS ONE'S TO TEST OUR PHYSICAL ABILITIES--DOUG'S BEIN' LOW-KEY AN' PSYCHIC IN NATURE--
--MADE SENSE FOR HIM TO SIT THIS ONE OUT.
MIRAGE'S POWERS ARE PSYCHIC, SAM, YET SHE'S WITH US.
I'M WAR-CHIEF, WOLFSBANE. IT'S MY JOB.
*IN ISSUES 47-51--A.

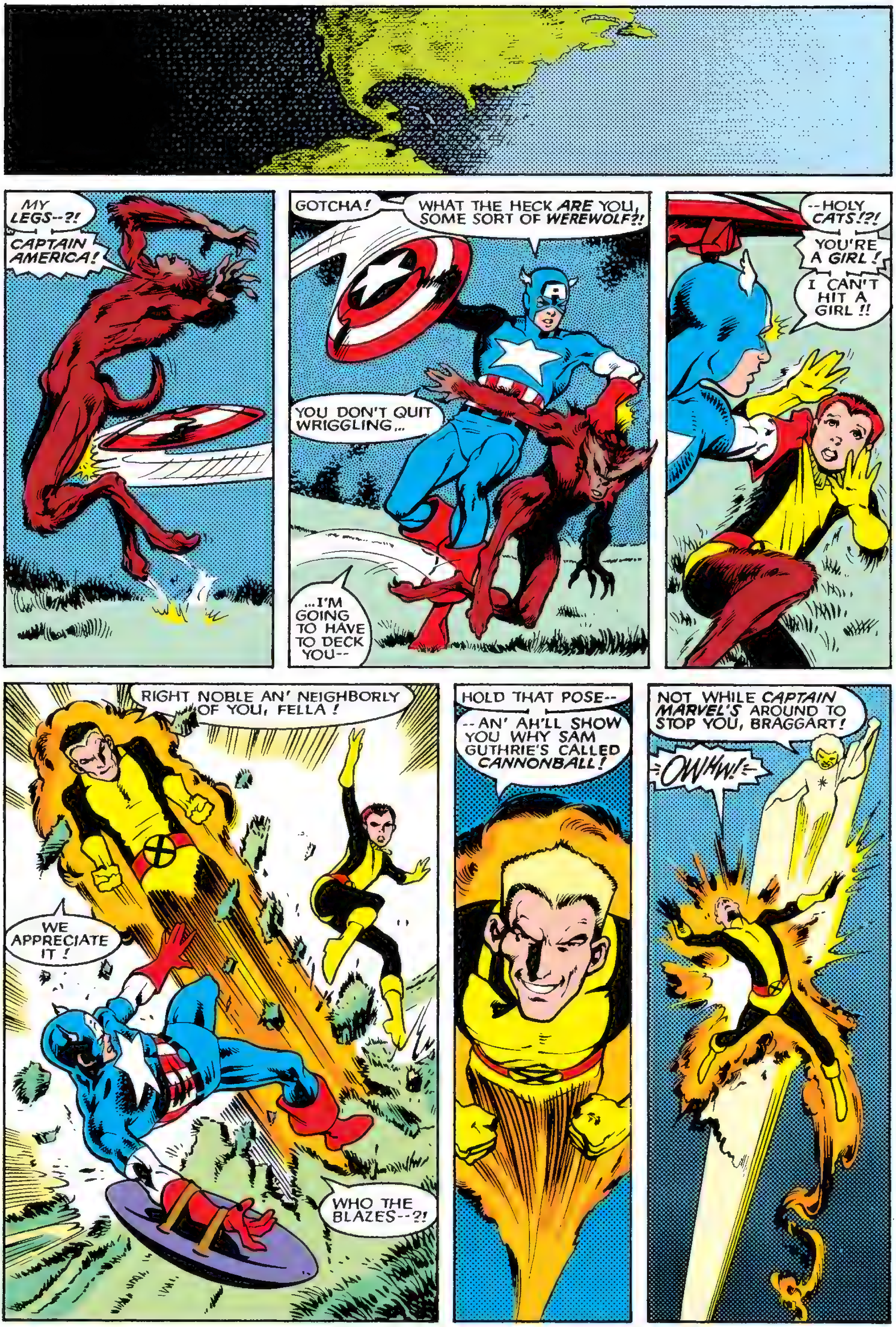

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT AT US, CYPHER...
...WE'LL TRIUMPH WITH EASE!
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR, LI'L BOBBY-BUDDY...

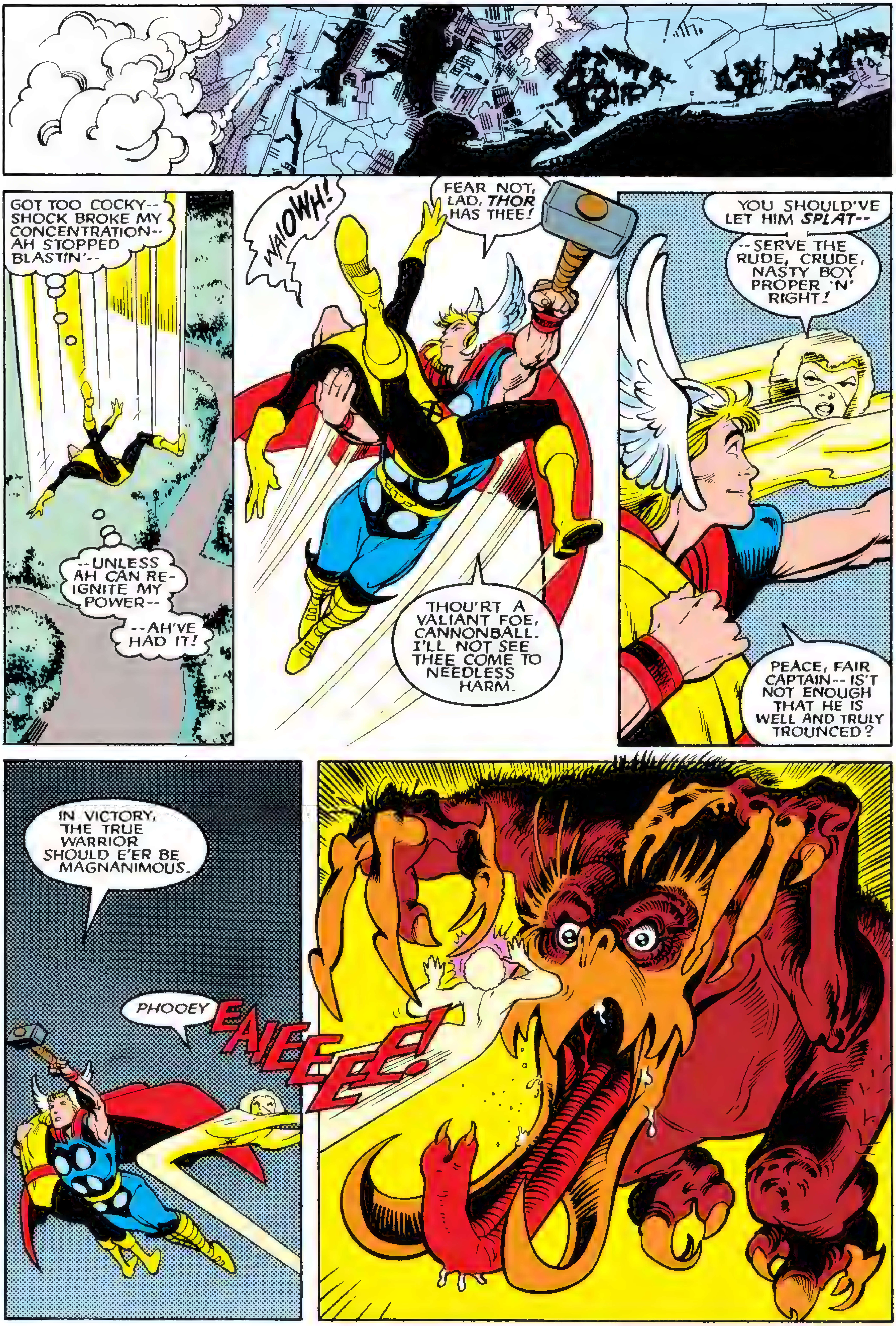

...'CAUSE THAT WISH MIGHT SOMETIMES BE GRANTED.
DOUG'S ACTIVATED THE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM--
--WE'RE IN CENTRAL PARK!
THE HECK WITH THAT, ILLYANA--
--LOOK WHO WE'RE S'POSED TO FIGHT:
...THE AVENGERS!

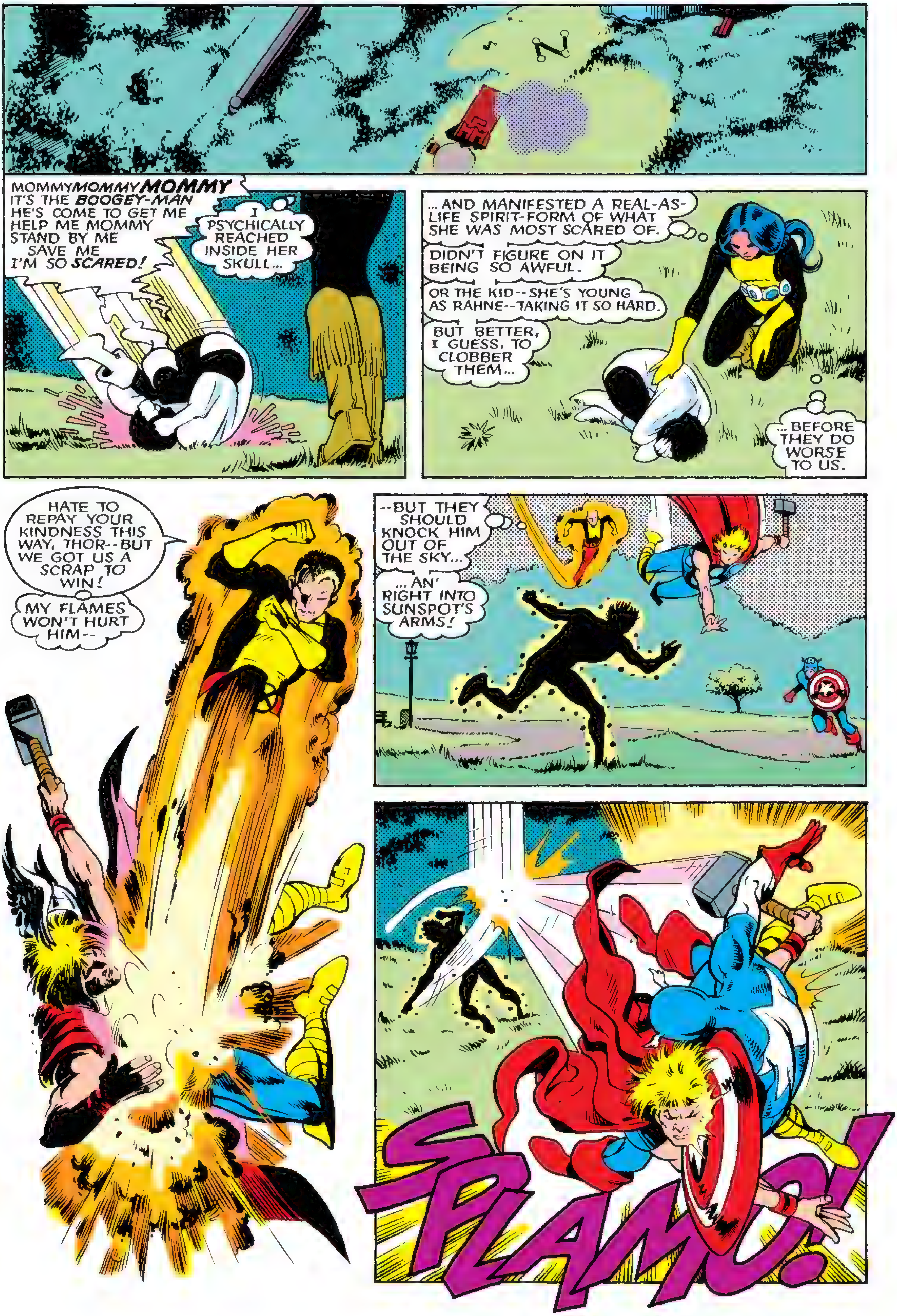

CUTE, DOUG, REAL CUTE.
ALARM ALARM ALARM-- HOW CAN SELF ENGAGE HOSTILITIES WITH ENTITIES DESIGNATED AS "SUPERHEROES?!"
THEY AREN'T THE REAL THING, WARLOCK, YOU DUNCE--
--ONLY DANGER ROOM SIMULACRUMS.
AND THEY'RE NO FRIENDS OF OURS-- THEY BEAT UP ON OUR TEACHER, MAGNETO, AND THE X-MEN.* THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO PAY THEM BACK--WITH INTEREST!
SO WHAT IF THEY'RE ADULTS--AND THE WORLD'S SUPPOSEDLY GREATEST HERO TEAM--ANYTHING THEY CAN DO...
*IN NEW MUTANTS #40 AND THE AVENGERS vs. THE X-MEN LIMITED SERIES--A.
...WE NEW MUTANTS CAN DO BETTER!!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, BOBBY.
BUT DON'T FRET, EVERYONE, I'M GONNA MAKE THE ODDS...
...A LITTLE MORE EVEN.
FTZSASZSKK!
HAVE FUN!
TEEN AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
LET'S GET 'EM, GLORY-HOUNDS!!

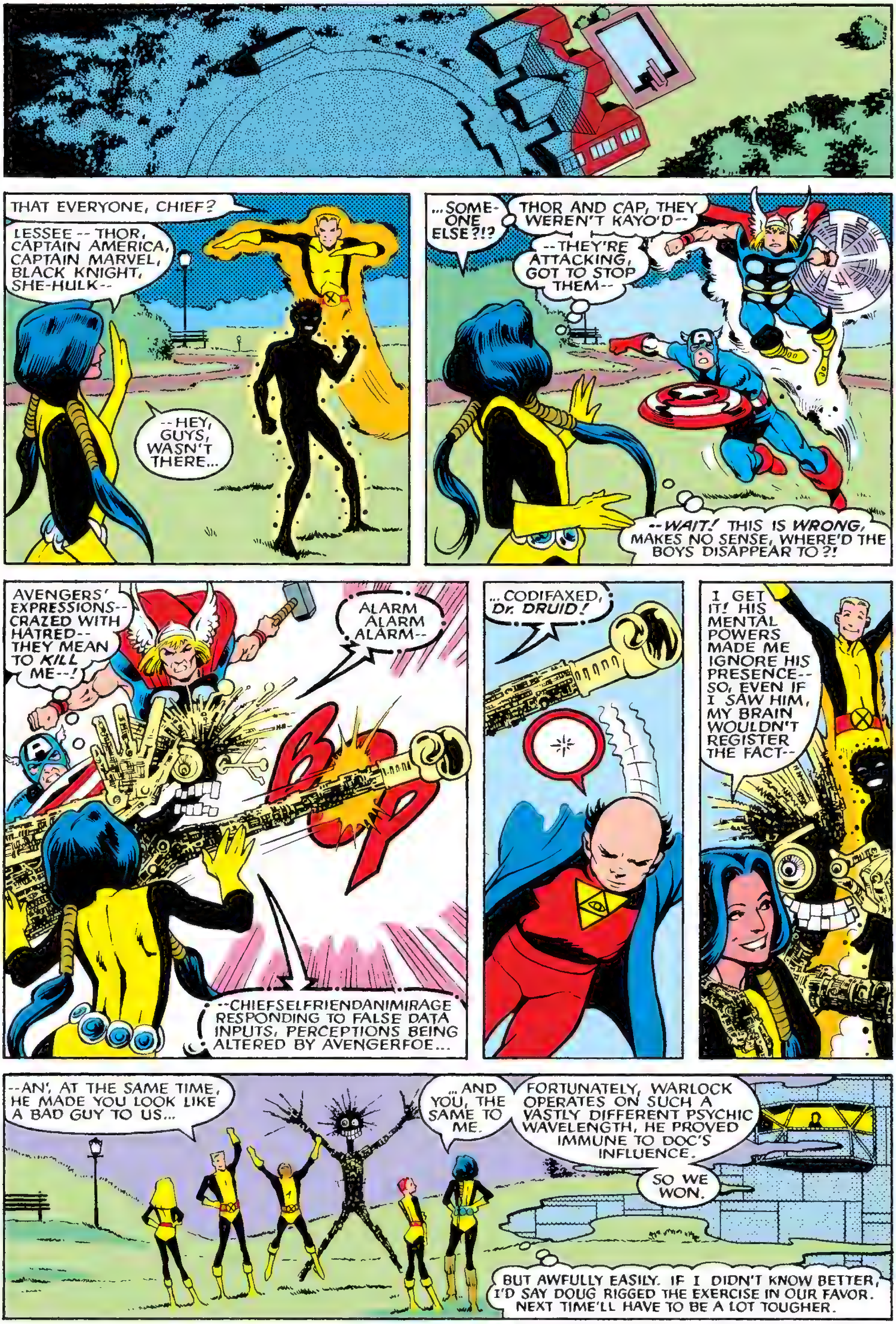

DARN-- I MISSED!
CAPTAIN MARVEL MAY MOVE AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT...
...BUT MAGIK TELEPORTS...
...WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT...
... ANYWHERE IN TIME AND SPACE.
HIYA, CUTIE!
TELL ME, BLACK KNIGHT...
...ARE YOU TICKLISH?
HEY HA HA CUT IT OUT hee hee
NO FAIR HO HO HOW CAN YOU DO THAT
giggle THROUGH MY CHAIN MAIL GUFFAW?!
LAUGHING SO HARD
CAN'T CONCENTRATE
HARDLY BREATHE
MY ATOMIC STEED
OUT OF CONTROL!
GOTTA GO, KNIGHT!
'BYE NOW--
-- HAPPY LANDINGS!
DELACORTE LAKE--
--MUD FLATS--
--TOTALLY YUCK--
--CAN'T PULL OUT--
--GONNA CRASH--
--oh, CRUMBS!!!
SPLOOTCH!

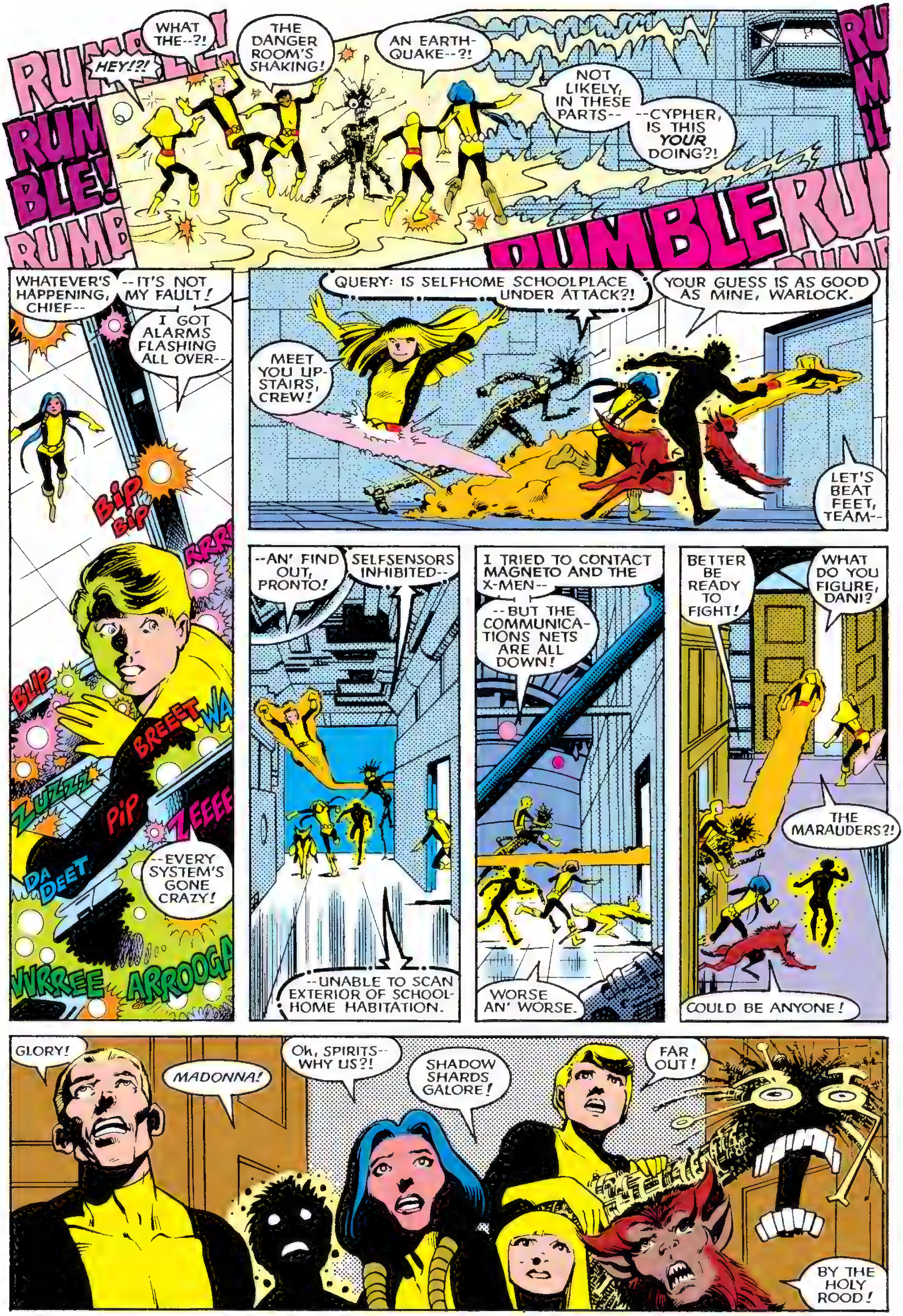

CATCH *THIS,* SHORTY!
YOU'RE STRONG, *SHE-HULK!*
BUT WITH SUNLIGHT CHARGING MY STRENGTH TO ITS MAXIMUM...
KRAKOW!
...SO AM *I!*
I DON'T NEED A ROCK TO FLATTEN YOU, BUSTER!
ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU'RE *BEAUTIFUL* WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY?
SMART REMARKS WON'T SAVE YOU, SUNSPOT!
Oh, NO?
HOW ABOUT A *KISS,* THEN?
!
SWEET DREAMS, *MENINA.*
ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED, MY DARLING...
...I LEARNED THAT, SADLY, THE HARD WAY.
A PITY THE REAL YOU IS SO OLD, SHE-HULK.
YOU'RE MY KIND OF GIRL.

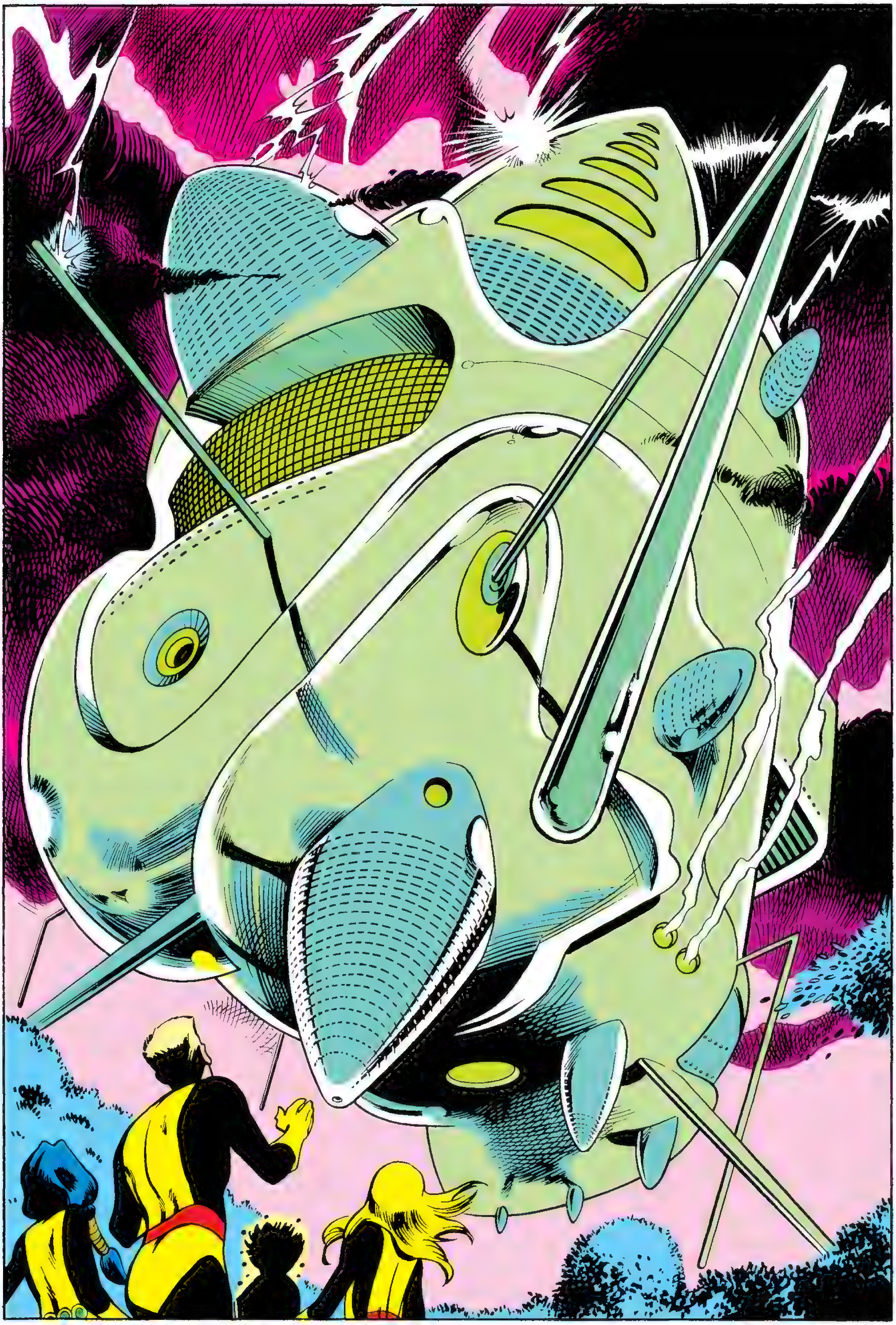

MY LEGS--?!
CAPTAIN AMERICA!
GOTCHA!
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU, SOME SORT OF WEREWOLF?!
YOU DON'T QUIT WRIGGLING...
...I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DECK YOU--
--HOLY CATS!?!
YOU'RE A GIRL!
I CAN'T HIT A GIRL!!
RIGHT NOBLE AN' NEIGHBORLY OF YOU, FELLA!
WE APPRECIATE IT!
WHO THE BLAZES--?!
HOLD THAT POSE--
--AN' AH'LL SHOW YOU WHY SAM GUTHRIE'S CALLED CANNONBALL!
NOT WHILE CAPTAIN MARVEL'S AROUND TO STOP YOU, BRAGGART!
OWWW!

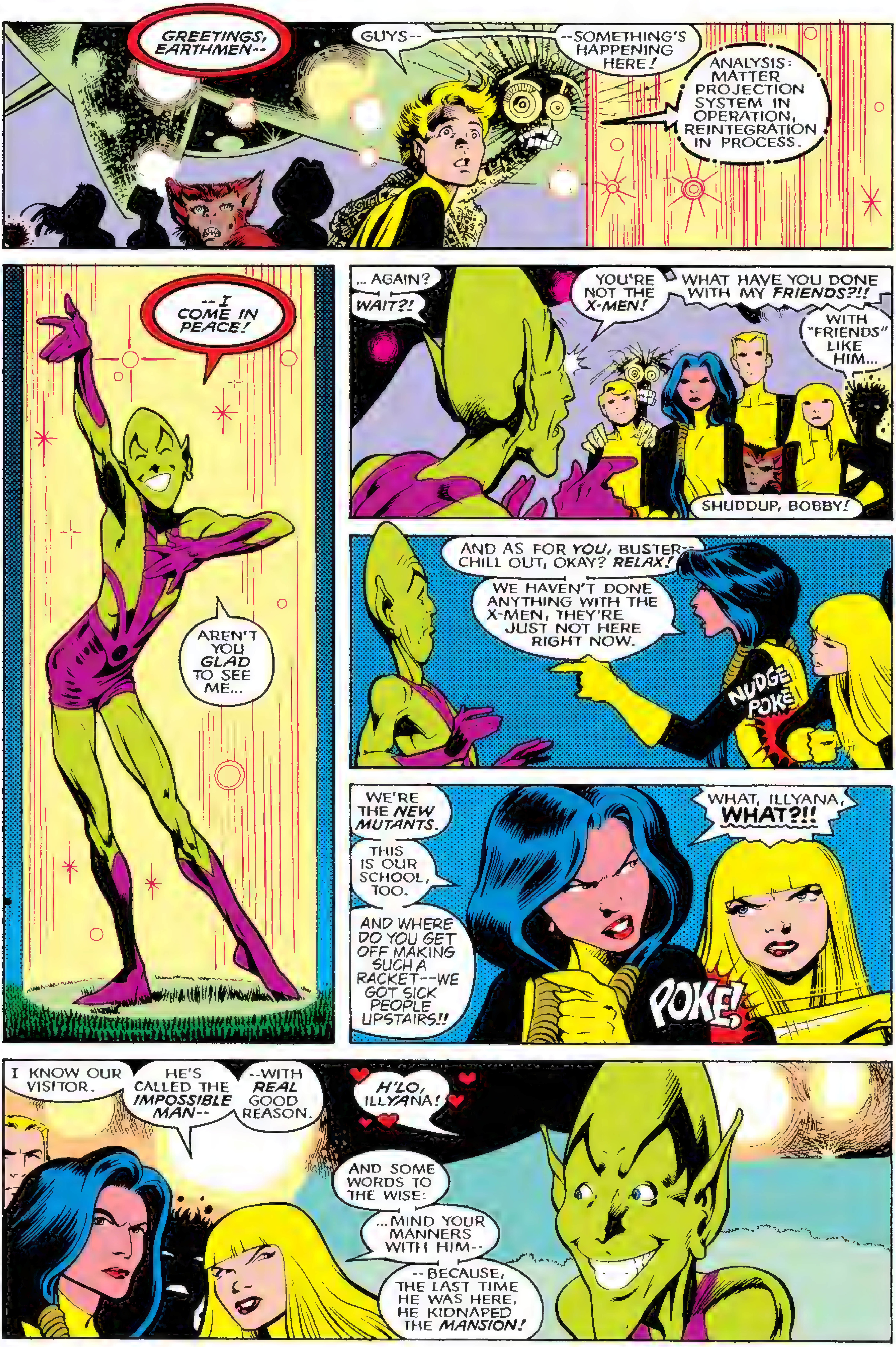

GOT TOO COCKY-- SHOCK BROKE MY CONCENTRATION-- AH STOPPED BLASTIN'--
--UNLESS AH CAN RE-IGNITE MY POWER--
--AH'VE HAD IT!
WAIOWH!
FEAR NOT, LAD, *THOR* HAS THEE!
THOU'RT A VALIANT FOE, CANNONBALL. I'LL NOT SEE THEE COME TO NEEDLESS HARM.
YOU SHOULD'VE LET HIM *SPLAT*--
--SERVE THE RUDE, CRUDE, NASTY BOY PROPER 'N' RIGHT!
PEACE, FAIR CAPTAIN-- IS'T NOT ENOUGH THAT HE IS WELL AND TRULY TROUNCED?
IN VICTORY, THE TRUE WARRIOR SHOULD E'ER BE MAGNANIMOUS.
PHOOEY
EAIEEEEE!

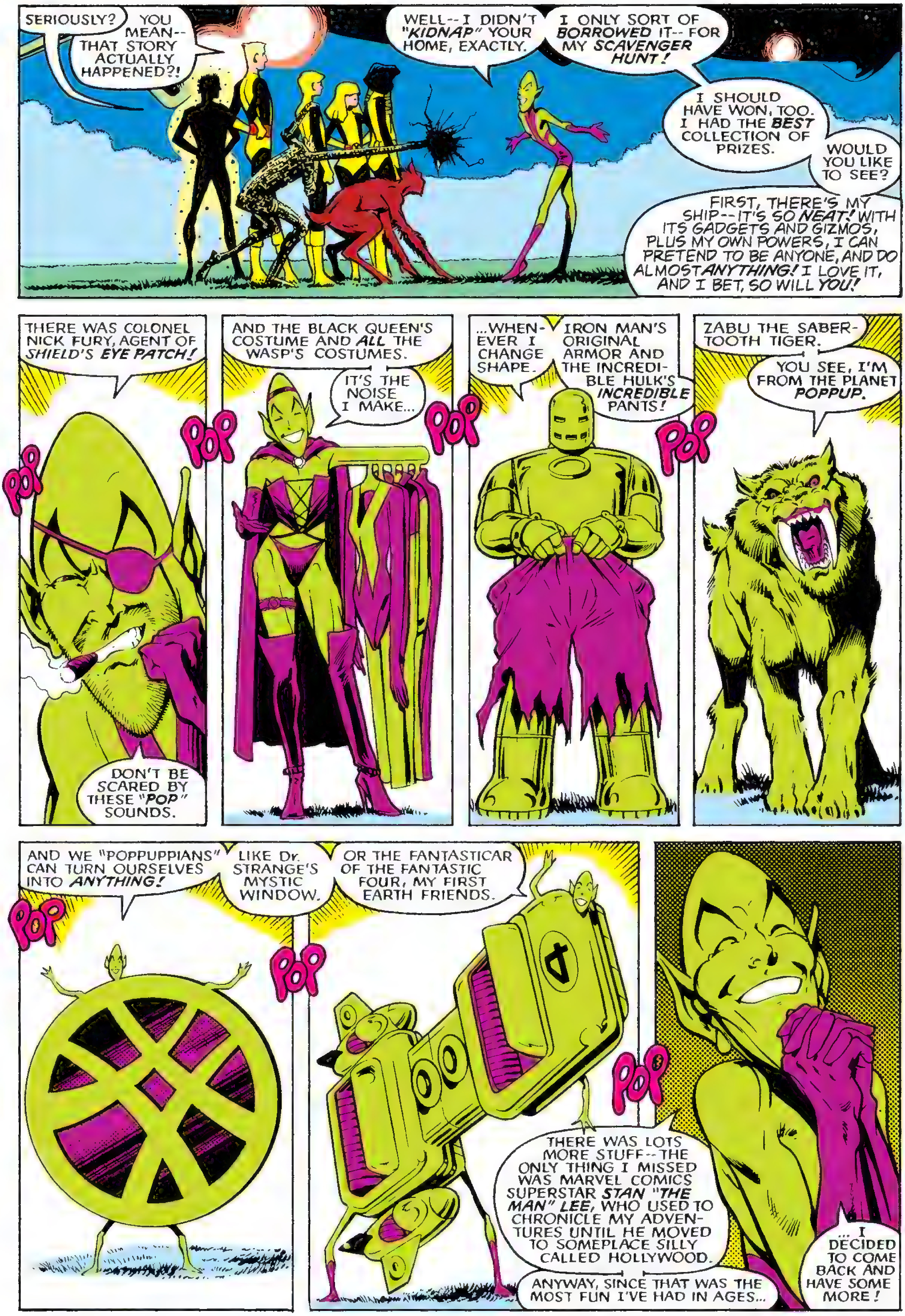

MOMMYMOMMYMOMMY IT'S THE BOOGEY-MAN HE'S COME TO GET ME HELP ME MOMMY STAND BY ME SAVE ME I'M SO SCARED!
I PSYCHICALLY REACHED INSIDE HER SKULL...
...AND MANIFESTED A REAL-AS-LIFE SPIRIT-FORM OF WHAT SHE WAS MOST SCARED OF.
DIDN'T FIGURE ON IT BEING SO AWFUL.
OR THE KID--SHE'S YOUNG AS RAHNE--TAKING IT SO HARD.
BUT BETTER, I GUESS, TO CLOBBER THEM...
...BEFORE THEY DO WORSE TO US.
HATE TO REPAY YOUR KINDNESS THIS WAY, THOR--BUT WE GOT US A SCRAP TO WIN!
MY FLAMES WON'T HURT HIM--
--BUT THEY SHOULD KNOCK HIM OUT OF THE SKY...
...AN' RIGHT INTO SUNSPOT'S ARMS!
SPLAMM!

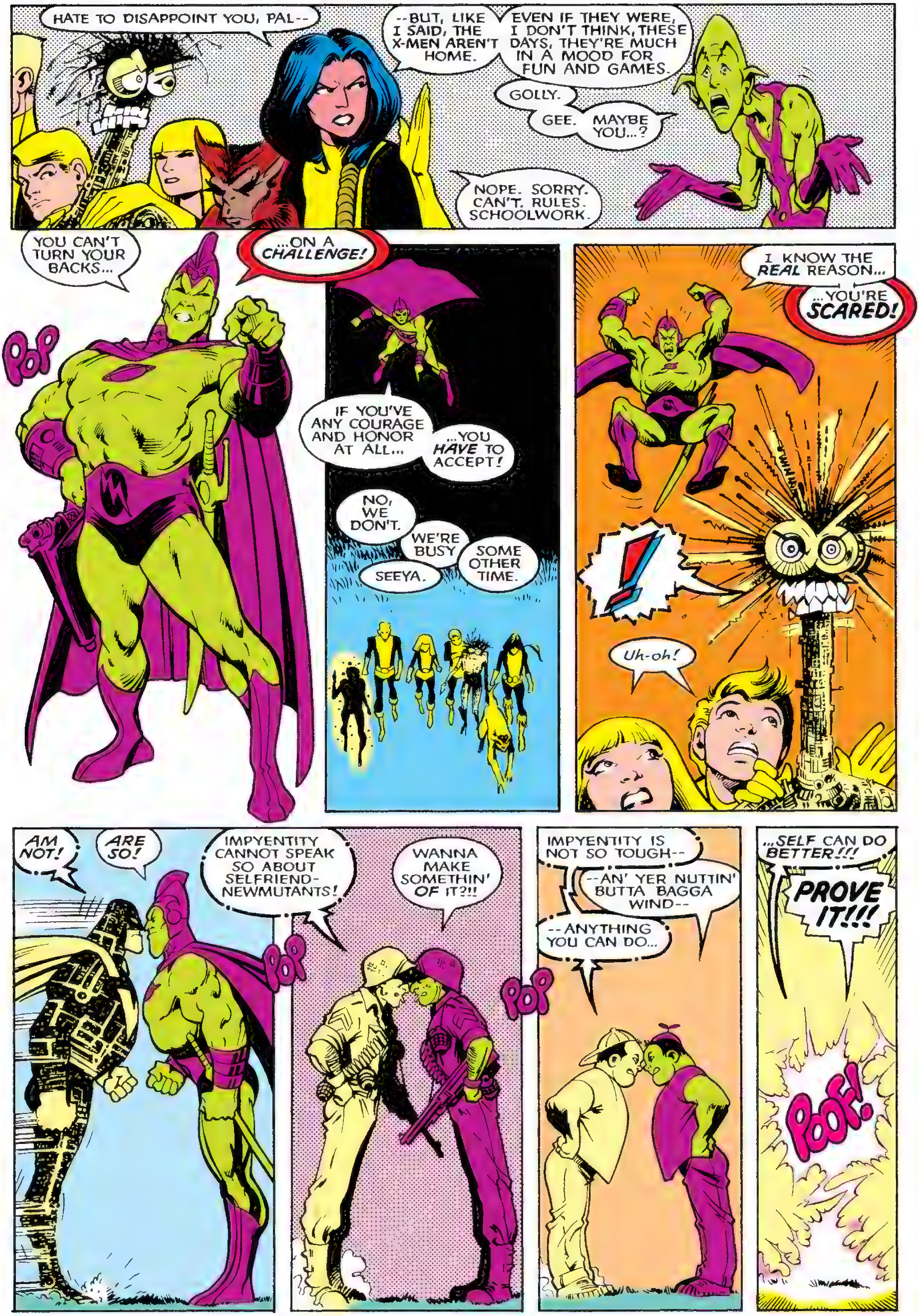

THAT EVERYONE, CHIEF?
LESSEE -- THOR, CAPTAIN AMERICA, CAPTAIN MARVEL, BLACK KNIGHT, SHE-HULK --
--HEY, GUYS, WASN'T THERE...
...SOMEONE ELSE?!?
THOR AND CAP, THEY WEREN'T KAYO'D--
--THEY'RE ATTACKING, GOT TO STOP THEM--
--WAIT! THIS IS WRONG, MAKES NO SENSE, WHERE'D THE BOYS DISAPPEAR TO?!
AVENGERS' EXPRESSIONS-- CRAZED WITH HATRED-- THEY MEAN TO KILL ME--!
ALARM ALARM ALARM--
BOP
--CHIEFSELFRIENDANIMIRAGE RESPONDING TO FALSE DATA INPUTS, PERCEPTIONS BEING ALTERED BY AVENGERFOE...
...CODIFAXED, Dr. DRUID!
I GET IT! HIS MENTAL POWERS MADE ME IGNORE HIS PRESENCE-- SO, EVEN IF I SAW HIM, MY BRAIN WOULDN'T REGISTER THE FACT--
--AN', AT THE SAME TIME, HE MADE YOU LOOK LIKE A BAD GUY TO US...
...AND YOU, THE SAME TO ME.
FORTUNATELY, WARLOCK OPERATES ON SUCH A VASTLY DIFFERENT PSYCHIC WAVELENGTH, HE PROVED IMMUNE TO DOC'S INFLUENCE.
SO WE WON.
BUT AWFULLY EASILY. IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY DOUG RIGGED THE EXERCISE IN OUR FAVOR. NEXT TIME'LL HAVE TO BE A LOT TOUGHER.

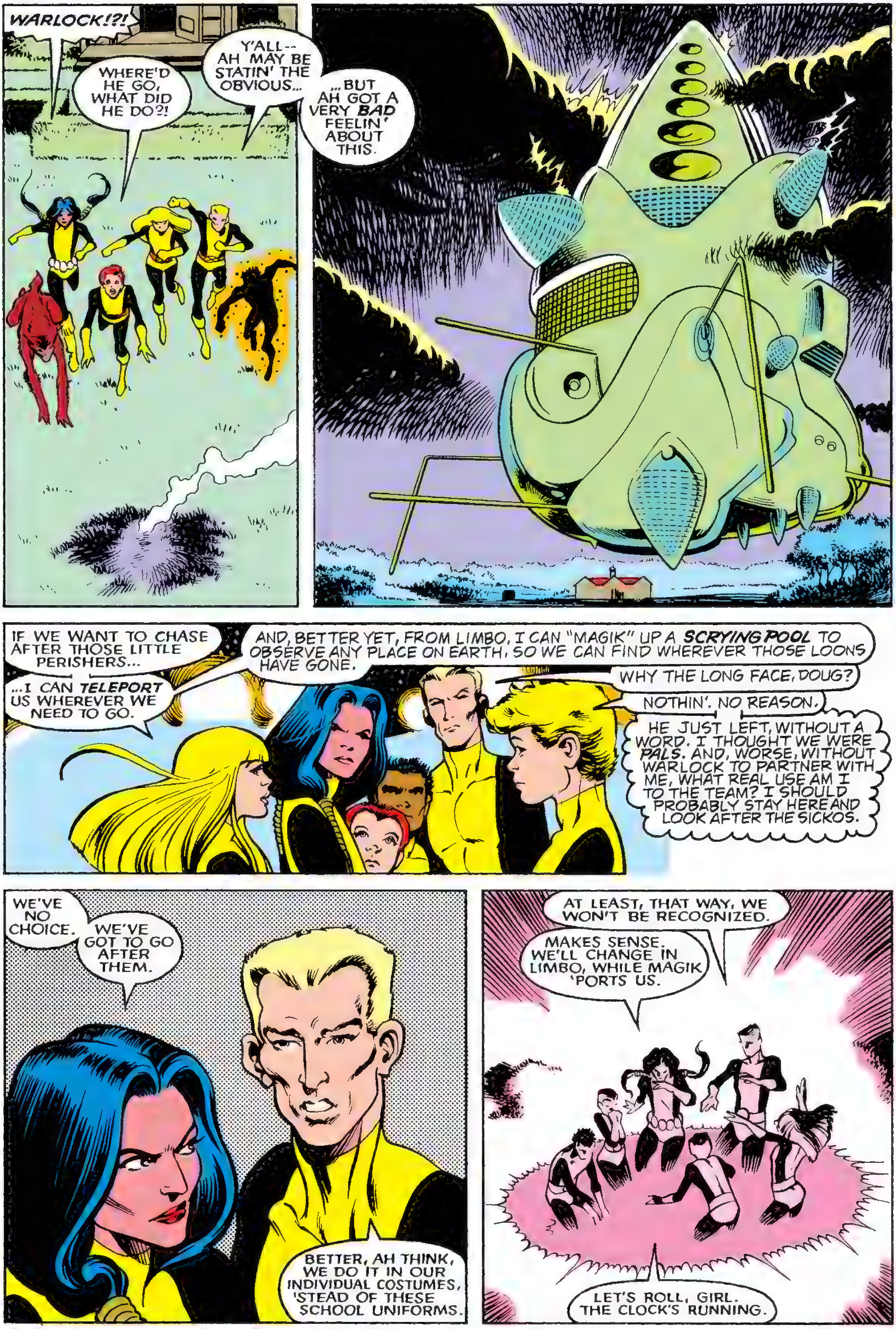

RUMBLE!
RUMBLE!
RUMB
HEY!?!
WHAT THE--?!
THE DANGER ROOM'S SHAKING!
AN EARTHQUAKE--?!
NOT LIKELY, IN THESE PARTS--
--CYPHER, IS THIS YOUR DOING?!
RUMBLE
RUMBLERU
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING, CHIEF--
--IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
I GOT ALARMS FLASHING ALL OVER--
BIP BIP
RRR
BLIP
BREEET
WA
ZUZZZZ
PIP
ZEEEE
DA DEET
--EVERY SYSTEM'S GONE CRAZY!
WRREE
ARROOGA
QUERY: IS SELFHOME SCHOOLPLACE UNDER ATTACK?!
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, WARLOCK.
MEET YOU UPSTAIRS, CREW!
LET'S BEAT FEET, TEAM--
--AN' FIND OUT, PRONTO!
SELFSENSORS INHIBITED--
--UNABLE TO SCAN EXTERIOR OF SCHOOLHOME HABITATION.
I TRIED TO CONTACT MAGNETO AND THE X-MEN--
--BUT THE COMMUNICATIONS NETS ARE ALL DOWN!
WORSE AN' WORSE.
BETTER BE READY TO FIGHT!
WHAT DO YOU FIGURE, DANI?
THE MARAUDERS?!
COULD BE ANYONE!
GLORY!
MADONNA!
Oh, SPIRITS--WHY US?!
SHADOW SHARDS GALORE!
FAR OUT!
BY THE HOLY ROOD!

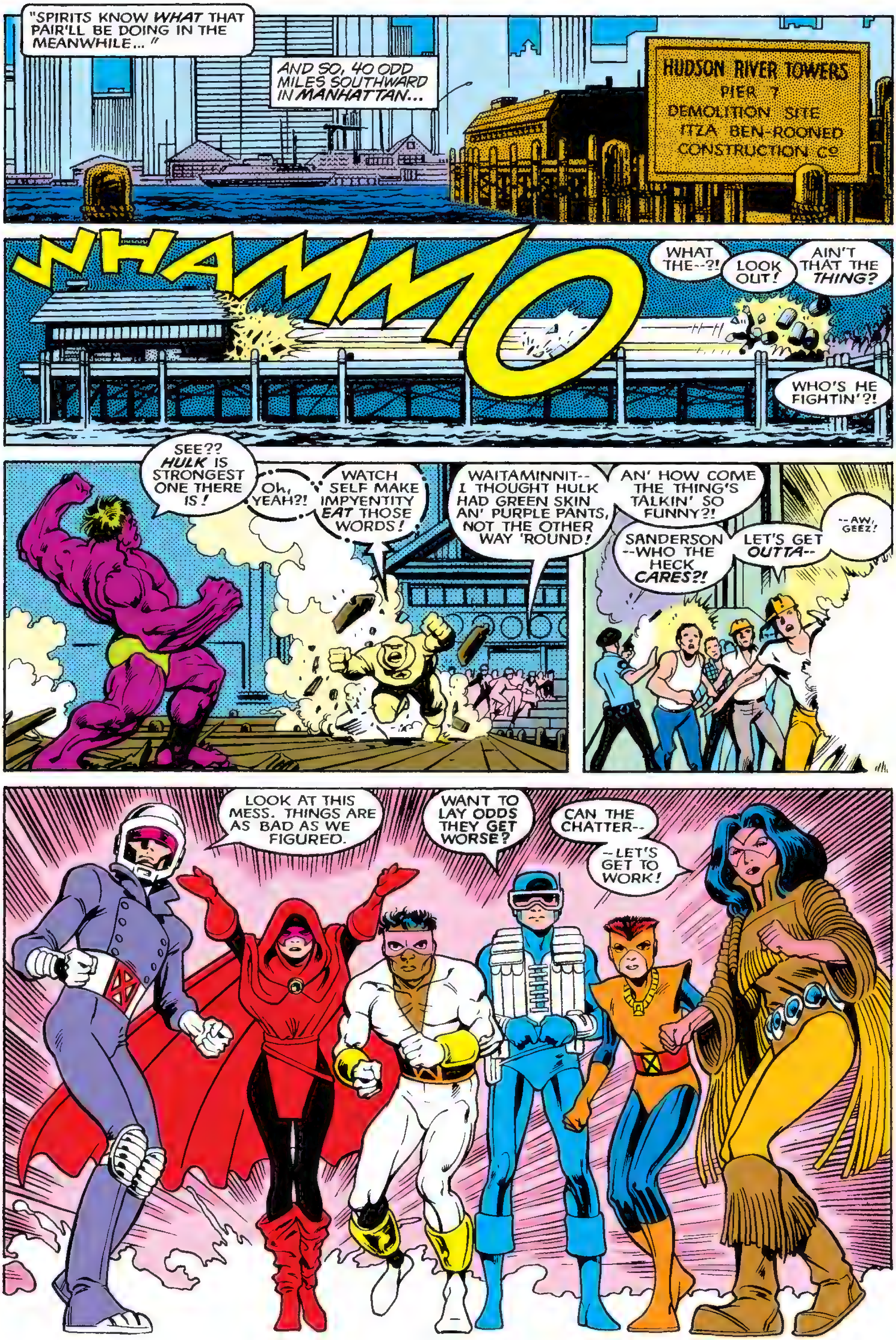


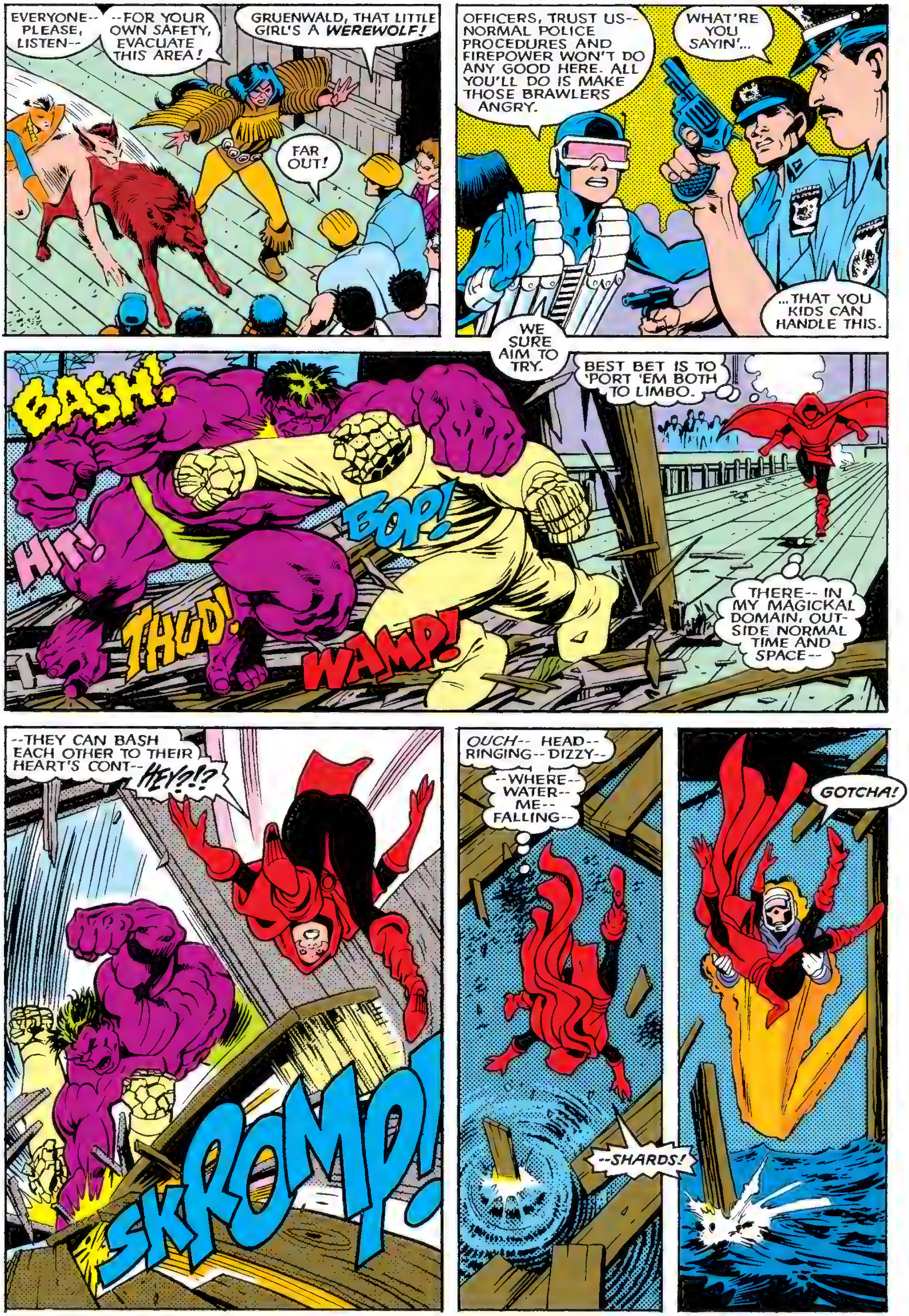

GREETINGS, EARTHMEN--
GUYS--
--SOMETHING'S HAPPENING HERE!
ANALYSIS: MATTER PROJECTION SYSTEM IN OPERATION, REINTEGRATION IN PROCESS.
--I COME IN PEACE!
AREN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME...
... AGAIN?
WAIT?!
YOU'RE NOT THE X-MEN!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY FRIENDS?!!
WITH "FRIENDS" LIKE HIM...
SHUDDUP, BOBBY!
AND AS FOR YOU, BUSTER-- CHILL OUT, OKAY? RELAX!
WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WITH THE X-MEN, THEY'RE JUST NOT HERE RIGHT NOW.
NUDGE
POKE
WE'RE THE NEW MUTANTS.
THIS IS OUR SCHOOL, TOO.
AND WHERE DO YOU GET OFF MAKING SUCH A RACKET--WE GOT SICK PEOPLE UPSTAIRS!!
WHAT, ILLYANA, WHAT?!!
POKE!
I KNOW OUR VISITOR.
HE'S CALLED THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN--
--WITH REAL GOOD REASON.
H'LO, ILLYANA!
AND SOME WORDS TO THE WISE:
...MIND YOUR MANNERS WITH HIM--
--BECAUSE, THE LAST TIME HE WAS HERE, HE KIDNAPED THE MANSION!

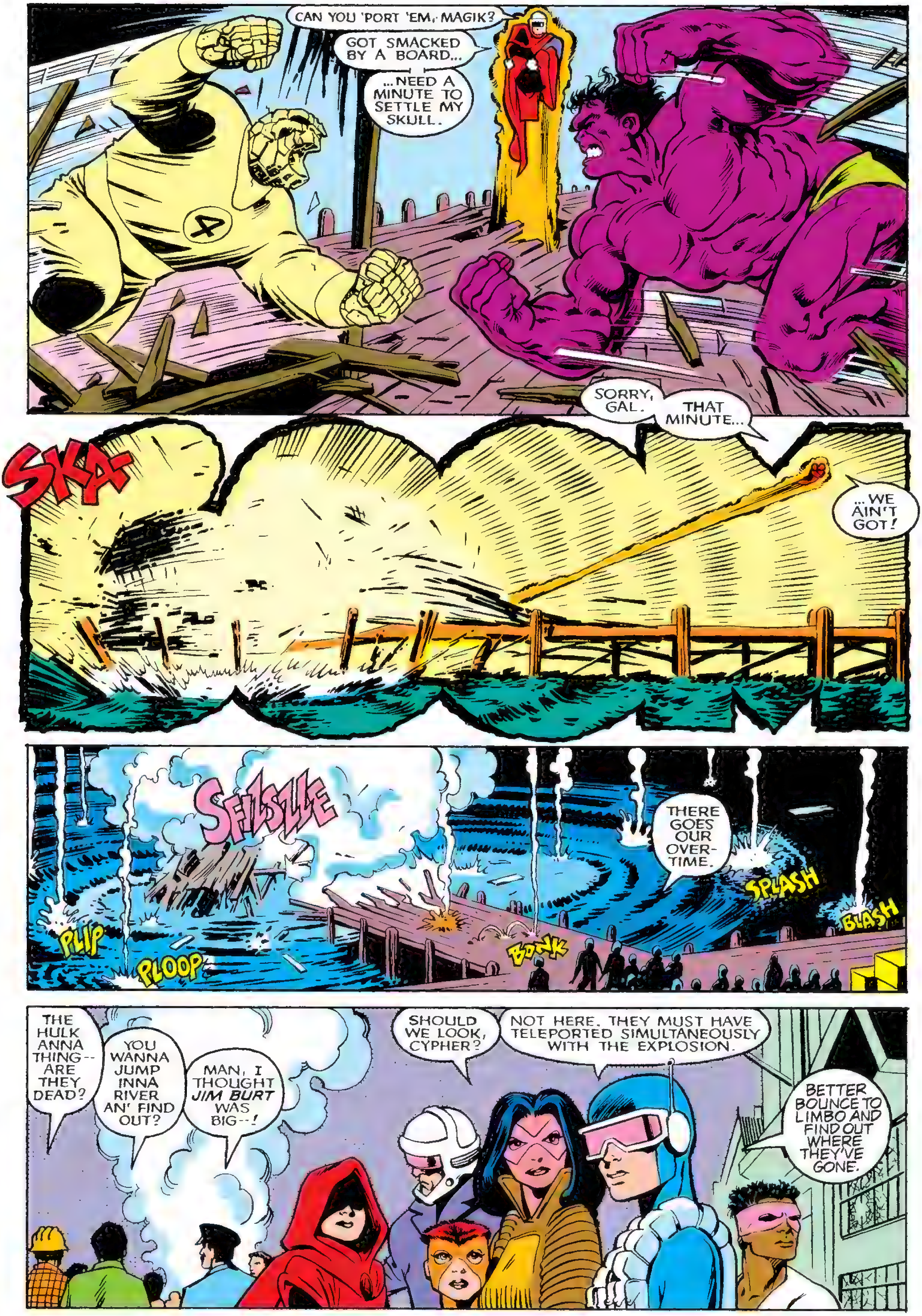

SERIOUSLY? YOU MEAN--THAT STORY ACTUALLY HAPPENED?!
WELL--I DIDN'T *"KIDNAP"* YOUR HOME, EXACTLY.
I ONLY SORT OF *BORROWED* IT-- FOR MY *SCAVENGER HUNT!*
I SHOULD HAVE WON, TOO. I HAD THE *BEST* COLLECTION OF PRIZES.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?
FIRST, THERE'S MY SHIP--IT'S SO *NEAT!* WITH ITS GADGETS AND GIZMOS, PLUS MY OWN POWERS, I CAN PRETEND TO BE ANYONE, AND DO ALMOST *ANYTHING!* I LOVE IT, AND I BET, SO WILL *YOU!*
THERE WAS COLONEL NICK FURY, AGENT OF *SHIELD'S EYE PATCH!*
POP
POP
DON'T BE SCARED BY THESE *"POP"* SOUNDS.
AND THE BLACK QUEEN'S COSTUME AND *ALL* THE WASP'S COSTUMES.
IT'S THE NOISE I MAKE...
POP
...WHENEVER I CHANGE SHAPE.
IRON MAN'S ORIGINAL ARMOR AND THE INCREDIBLE HULK'S *INCREDIBLE* PANTS!
POP
ZABU THE SABER-TOOTH TIGER.
YOU SEE, I'M FROM THE PLANET *POPPUP.*
AND WE "POPPUPPIANS" CAN TURN OURSELVES INTO *ANYTHING!*
POP
LIKE Dr. STRANGE'S MYSTIC WINDOW.
POP
OR THE FANTASTICAR OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, MY FIRST EARTH FRIENDS.
POP
THERE WAS LOTS MORE STUFF--THE ONLY THING I MISSED WAS MARVEL COMICS SUPERSTAR *STAN "THE MAN" LEE,* WHO USED TO CHRONICLE MY ADVENTURES UNTIL HE MOVED TO SOMEPLACE SILLY CALLED HOLLYWOOD.
ANYWAY, SINCE THAT WAS THE MOST FUN I'VE HAD IN AGES...
...I DECIDED TO COME BACK AND HAVE SOME MORE!

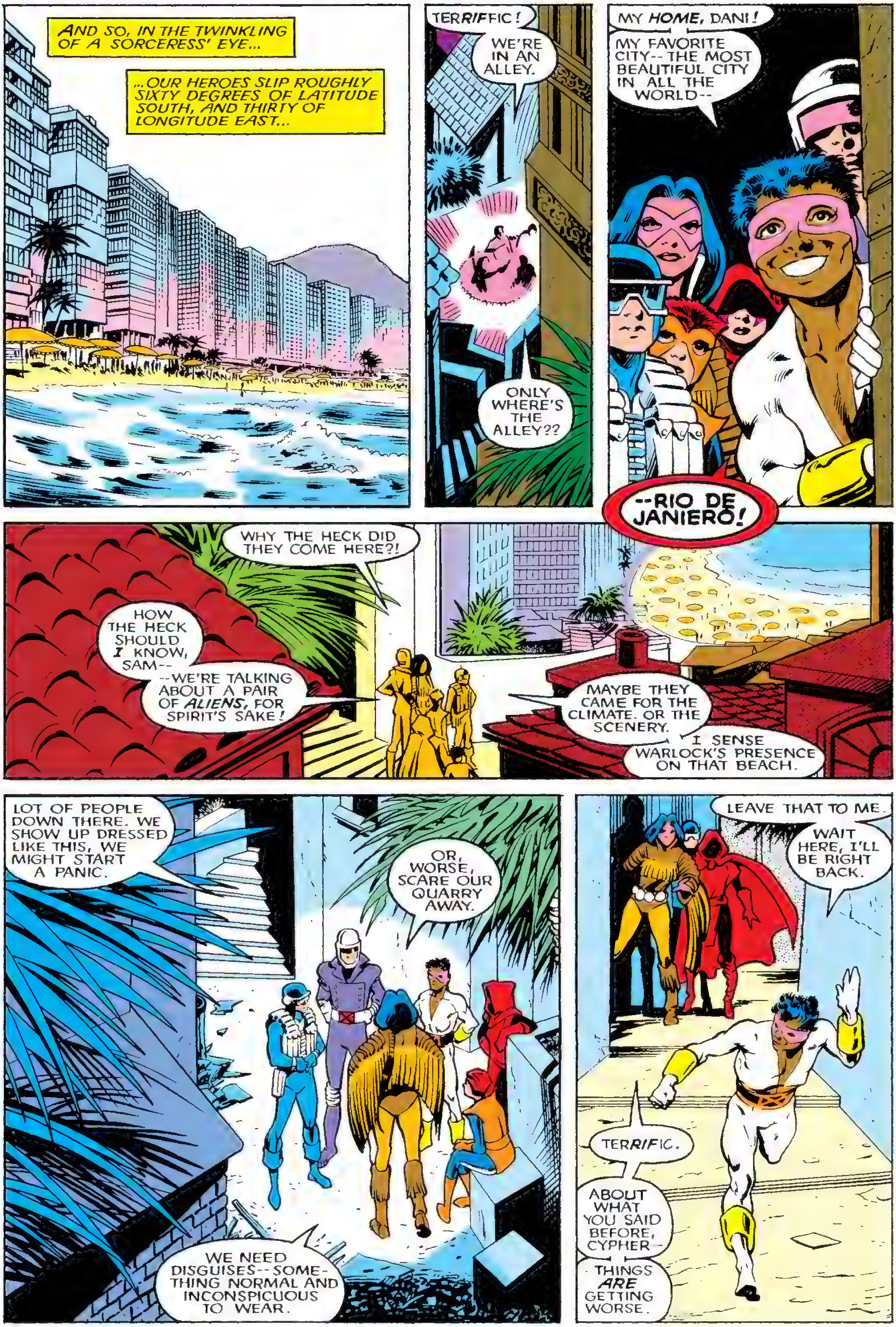

HATE TO DISAPPOINT YOU, PAL--
--BUT, LIKE I SAID, THE X-MEN AREN'T HOME.
EVEN IF THEY WERE, I DON'T THINK, THESE DAYS, THEY'RE MUCH IN A MOOD FOR FUN AND GAMES.
GOLLY.
GEE.
MAYBE YOU...?
NOPE. SORRY. CAN'T. RULES. SCHOOLWORK.
YOU CAN'T TURN YOUR BACKS...
...ON A CHALLENGE!
POP
IF YOU'VE ANY COURAGE AND HONOR AT ALL...
...YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT!
NO, WE DON'T.
WE'RE BUSY.
SOME OTHER TIME.
SEEYA.
I KNOW THE REAL REASON...
...YOU'RE SCARED!
!
Uh-oh!
AM NOT!
ARE SO!
IMPYENTITY CANNOT SPEAK SO ABOUT SELFRIEND-NEWMUTANTS!
POP
WANNA MAKE SOMETHIN' OF IT?!!
POP
IMPYENTITY IS NOT SO TOUGH--
--AN' YER NUTTIN' BUTTA BAGGA WIND--
--ANYTHING YOU CAN DO...
...SELF CAN DO BETTER!!!
PROVE IT!!!
POOF!

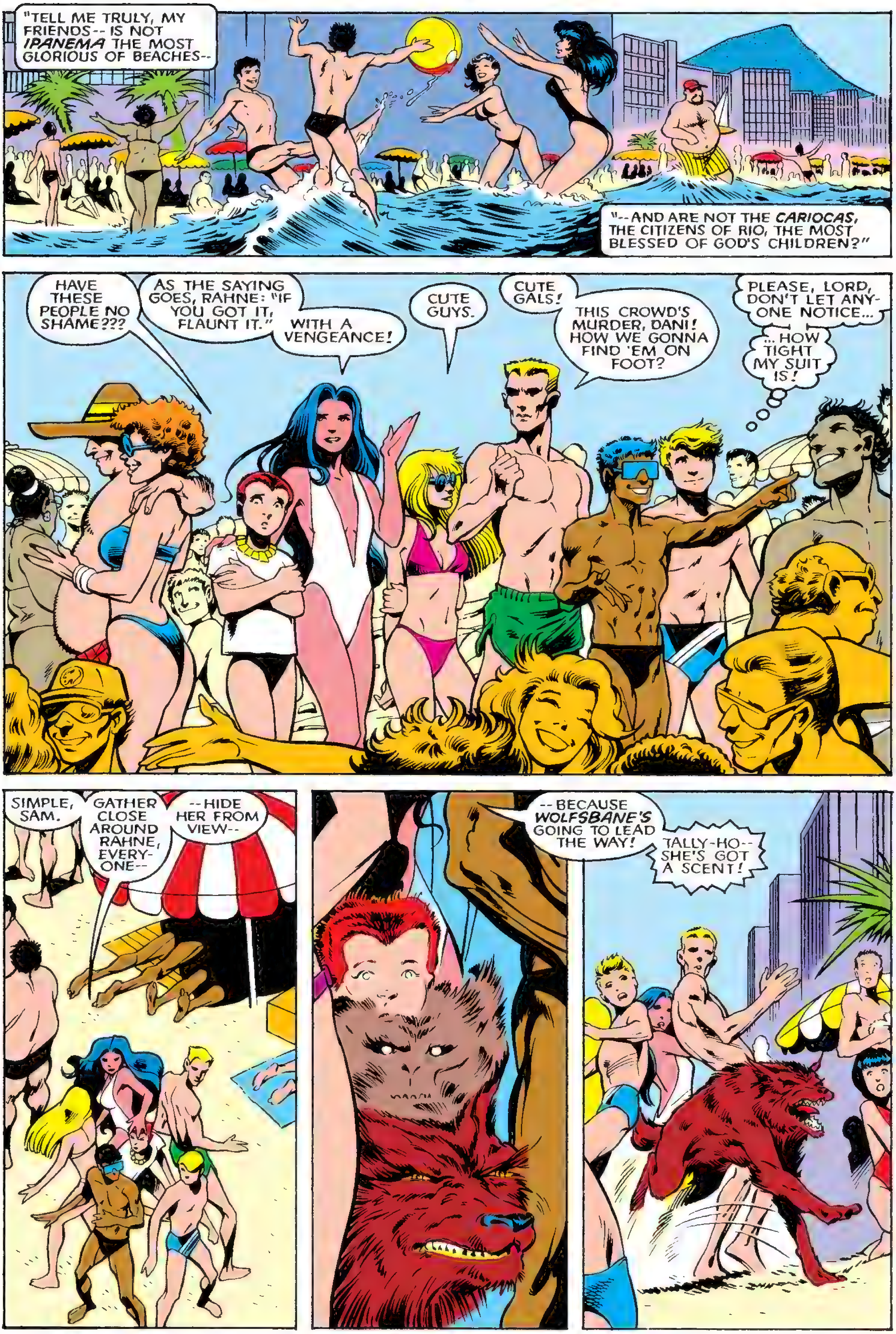

WARLOCK!?!
WHERE'D HE GO, WHAT DID HE DO?!
Y'ALL-- AH MAY BE STATIN' THE OBVIOUS...
...BUT AH GOT A VERY *BAD* FEELIN' ABOUT THIS.
IF WE WANT TO CHASE AFTER THOSE LITTLE PERISHERS...
...I CAN *TELEPORT* US WHEREVER WE NEED TO GO.
AND, BETTER YET, FROM LIMBO, I CAN "MAGIK" UP A *SCRYING POOL* TO OBSERVE ANY PLACE ON EARTH, SO WE CAN FIND WHEREVER THOSE LOONS HAVE GONE.
WHY THE LONG FACE, DOUG?
NOTHIN'. NO REASON.
HE JUST LEFT, WITHOUT A WORD. I THOUGHT WE WERE *PALS*. AND, WORSE, WITHOUT WARLOCK TO PARTNER WITH ME, WHAT REAL USE AM I TO THE TEAM? I SHOULD PROBABLY STAY HERE AND LOOK AFTER THE SICKOS.
WE'VE NO CHOICE.
WE'VE GOT TO GO AFTER THEM.
BETTER, AH THINK, WE DO IT IN OUR INDIVIDUAL COSTUMES, 'STEAD OF THESE SCHOOL UNIFORMS.
AT LEAST, THAT WAY, WE WON'T BE RECOGNIZED.
MAKES SENSE. WE'LL CHANGE IN LIMBO, WHILE MAGIK 'PORTS US.
LET'S ROLL, GIRL. THE CLOCK'S RUNNING.

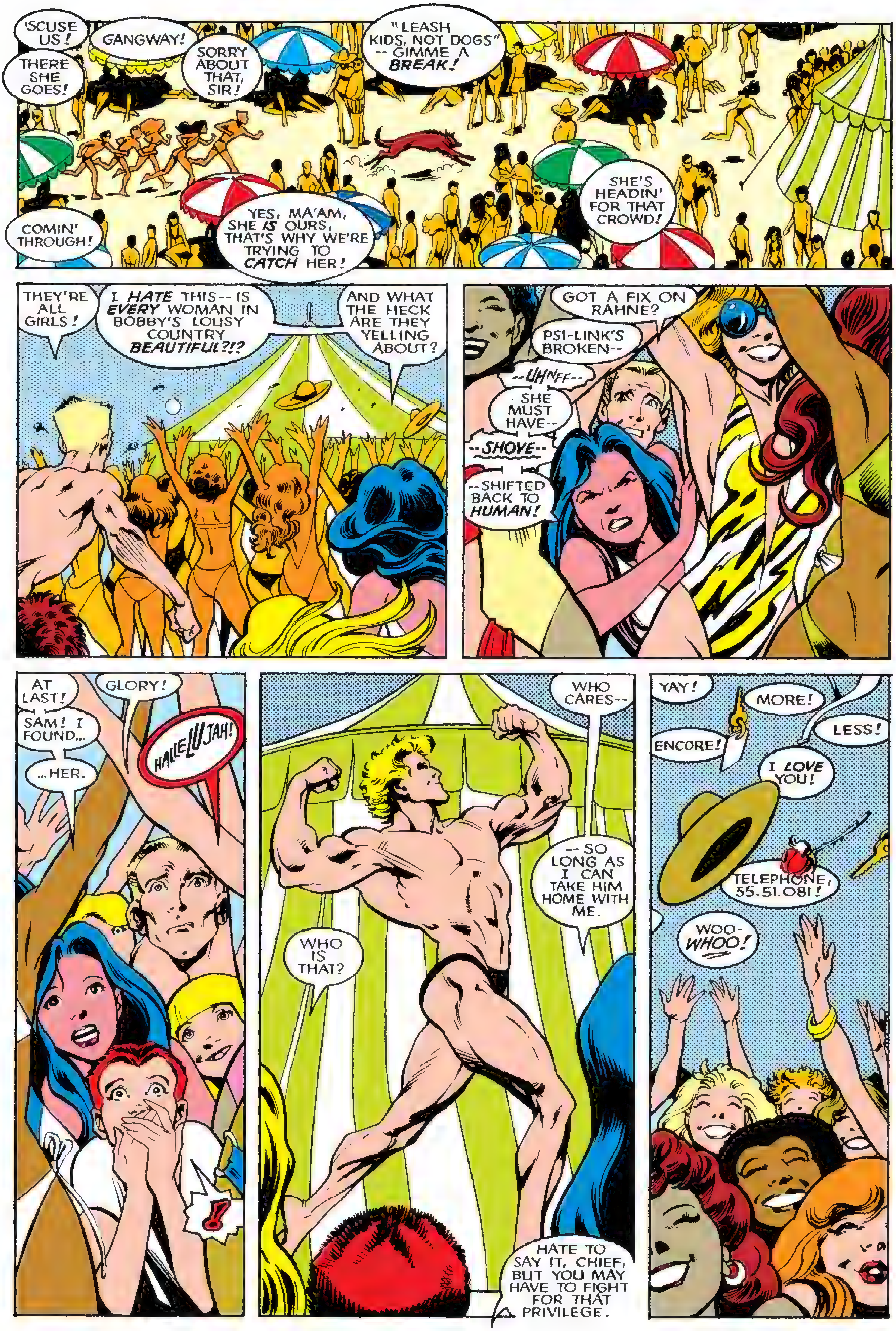

"SPIRITS KNOW *WHAT* THAT PAIR'LL BE DOING IN THE MEANWHILE..."
AND SO, 40 ODD MILES SOUTHWARD IN *MANHATTAN*...
HUDSON RIVER TOWERS PIER 7 DEMOLITION SITE ITZA BEN-ROONED CONSTRUCTION Co
WHAMMO
WHAT THE--?!
LOOK OUT!
AIN'T THAT THE *THING?*
WHO'S HE FIGHTIN'?!
SEE?? *HULK* IS STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!
Oh, YEAH?!
WATCH SELF MAKE IMPYENTITY *EAT* THOSE WORDS!
WAITAMINNIT-- I THOUGHT HULK HAD GREEN SKIN AN' PURPLE PANTS, NOT THE OTHER WAY 'ROUND!
AN' HOW COME THE THING'S TALKIN' SO FUNNY?!
SANDERSON --WHO THE HECK *CARES?!*
LET'S GET *OUTTA--*
--AW, GEEZ!
LOOK AT THIS MESS. THINGS ARE AS BAD AS WE FIGURED.
WANT TO LAY ODDS THEY GET WORSE?
CAN THE CHATTER--
--LET'S GET TO WORK!

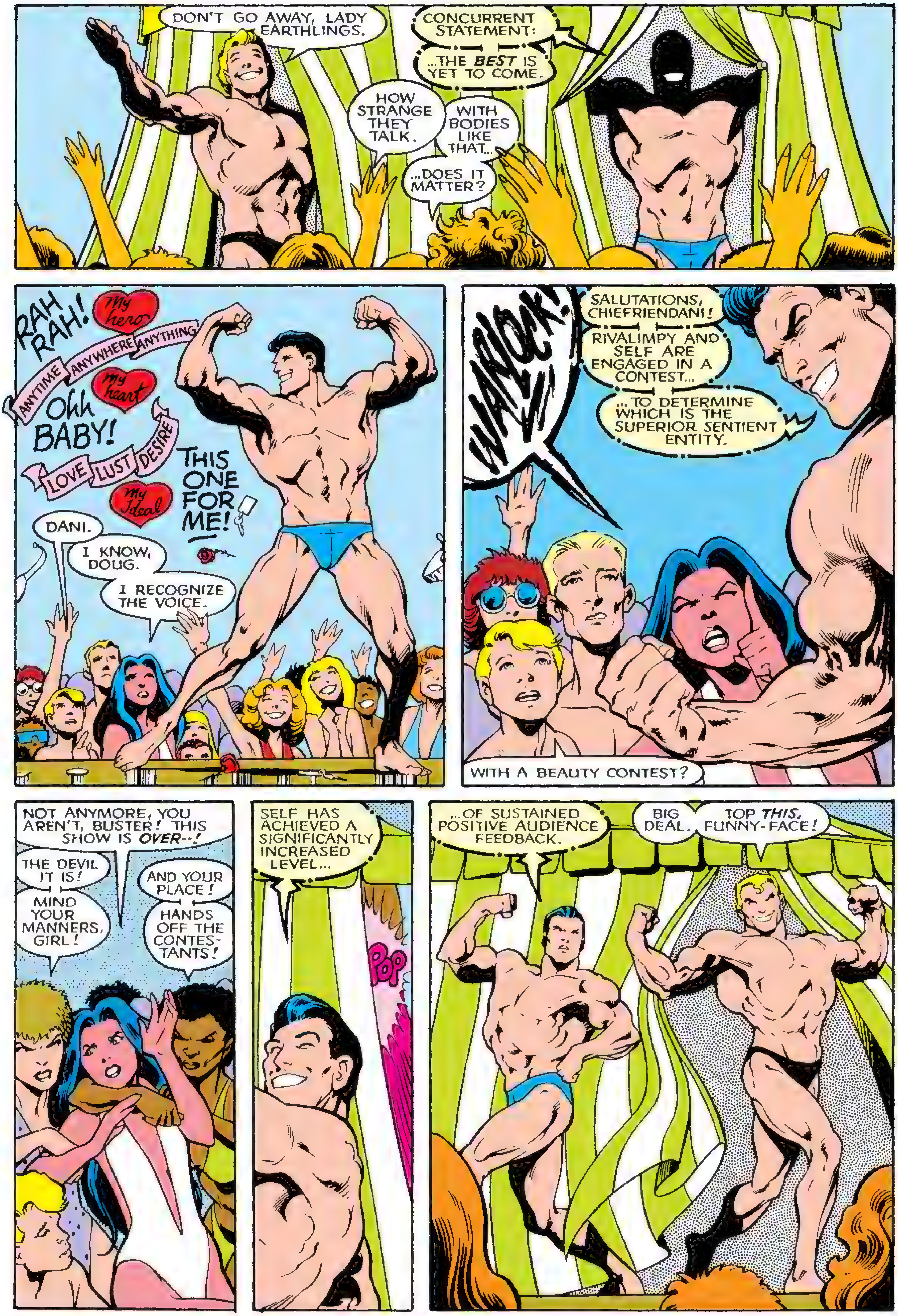

EVERYONE-- PLEASE, LISTEN--
--FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, EVACUATE THIS AREA!
GRUENWALD, THAT LITTLE GIRL'S A *WEREWOLF!*
FAR OUT!
OFFICERS, TRUST US-- NORMAL POLICE PROCEDURES AND FIREPOWER WON'T DO ANY GOOD HERE. ALL YOU'LL DO IS MAKE THOSE BRAWLERS ANGRY.
WHAT'RE YOU SAYIN'...
...THAT YOU KIDS CAN HANDLE THIS.
WE SURE AIM TO TRY.
BASH!
BEST BET IS TO 'PORT 'EM BOTH TO LIMBO.
HIT!
BOP!
THUD!
WAMP!
THERE-- IN MY MAGICKAL DOMAIN, OUTSIDE NORMAL TIME AND SPACE--
--THEY CAN BASH EACH OTHER TO THEIR HEART'S CONT-- HEY?!?
SKROMP!
OUCH-- HEAD-- RINGING-- DIZZY--
--WHERE-- WATER-- ME-- FALLING--
--SHARDS!
GOTCHA!

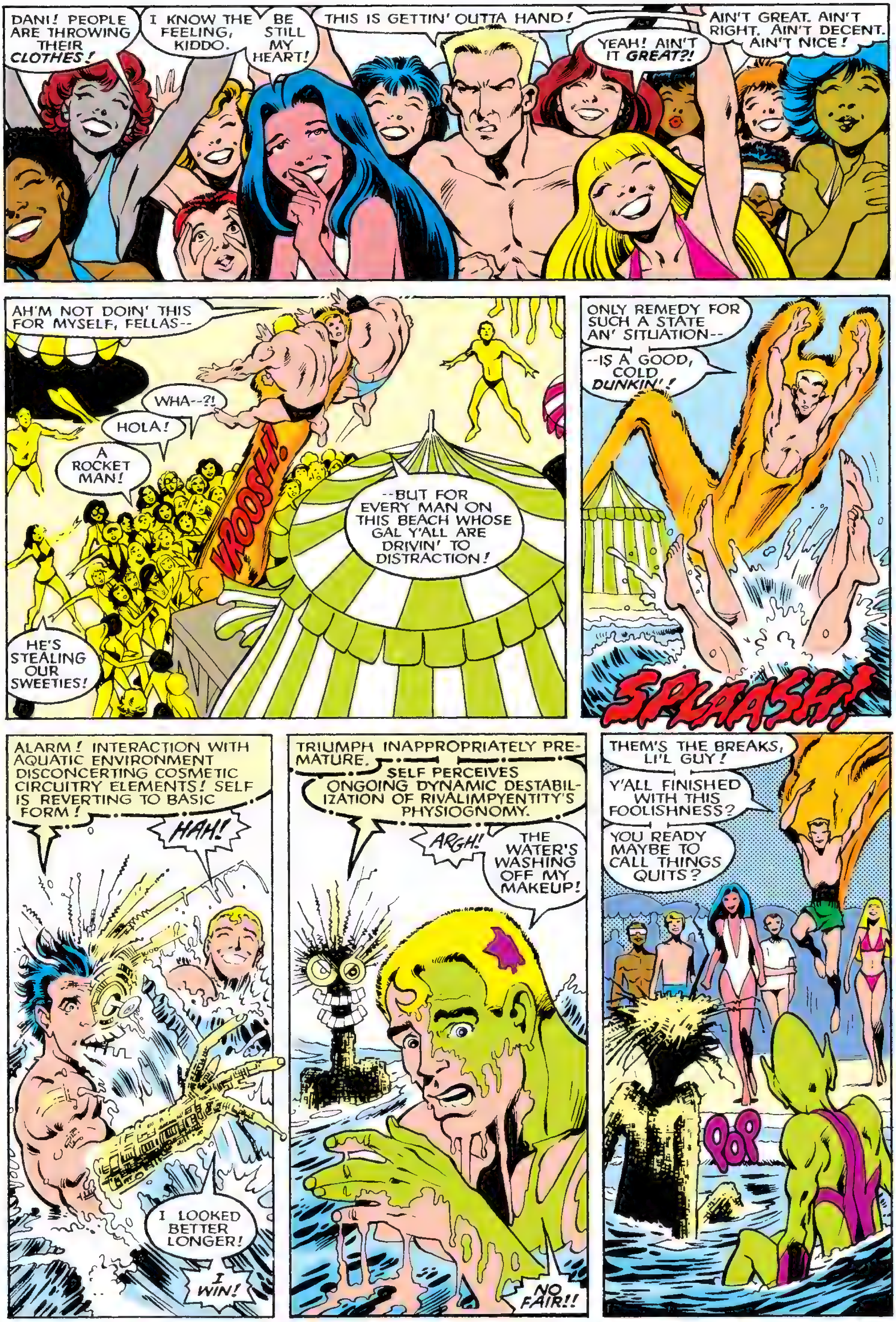

CAN YOU 'PORT 'EM, MAGIK?
GOT SMACKED BY A BOARD...
...NEED A MINUTE TO SETTLE MY SKULL.
SORRY, GAL.
THAT MINUTE...
SKA-
...WE AIN'T GOT!
SFIZZLE
THERE GOES OUR OVERTIME.
SPLASH
BLASH
PLIP
PLOOP
BONK
THE HULK ANNA THING--ARE THEY DEAD?
YOU WANNA JUMP INNA RIVER AN' FIND OUT?
MAN, I THOUGHT *JIM BURT* WAS BIG--!
SHOULD WE LOOK, CYPHER?
NOT HERE. THEY MUST HAVE TELEPORTED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE EXPLOSION.
BETTER BOUNCE TO LIMBO AND FIND OUT WHERE THEY'VE GONE.

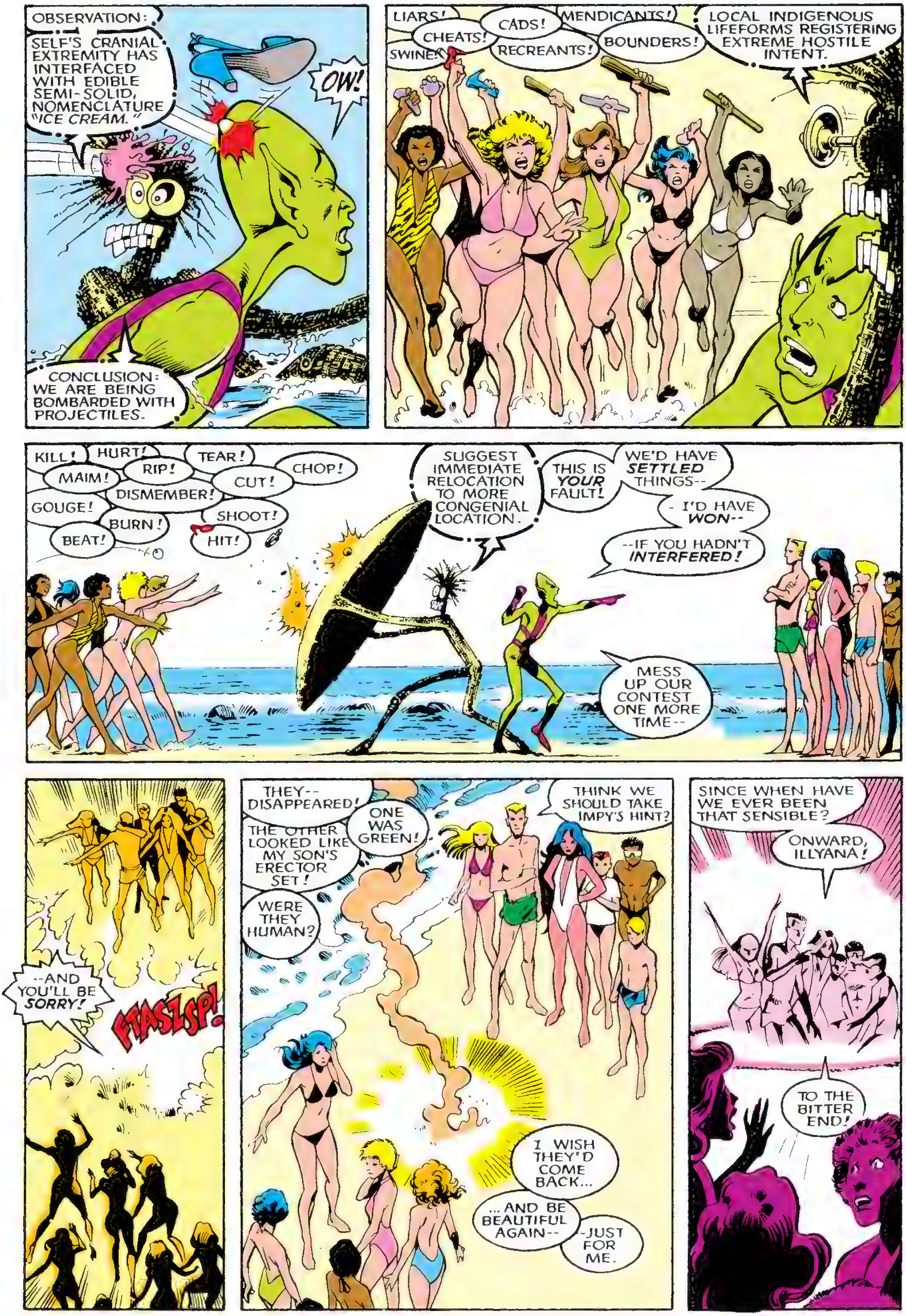

AND SO, IN THE TWINKLING OF A SORCERESS' EYE...
...OUR HEROES SLIP ROUGHLY SIXTY DEGREES OF LATITUDE SOUTH, AND THIRTY OF LONGITUDE EAST...
TERRIFFIC!
WE'RE IN AN ALLEY.
ONLY WHERE'S THE ALLEY??
MY HOME, DANI!
MY FAVORITE CITY--THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY IN ALL THE WORLD--
--RIO DE JANIERO!
WHY THE HECK DID THEY COME HERE?!
HOW THE HECK SHOULD I KNOW, SAM--
--WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A PAIR OF ALIENS, FOR SPIRIT'S SAKE!
MAYBE THEY CAME FOR THE CLIMATE. OR THE SCENERY.
I SENSE WARLOCK'S PRESENCE ON THAT BEACH.
LOT OF PEOPLE DOWN THERE. WE SHOW UP DRESSED LIKE THIS, WE MIGHT START A PANIC.
OR, WORSE, SCARE OUR QUARRY AWAY.
WE NEED DISGUISES--SOMETHING NORMAL AND INCONSPICUOUS TO WEAR.
LEAVE THAT TO ME.
WAIT HERE, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
TERRIFIC.
ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE, CYPHER--
THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE.

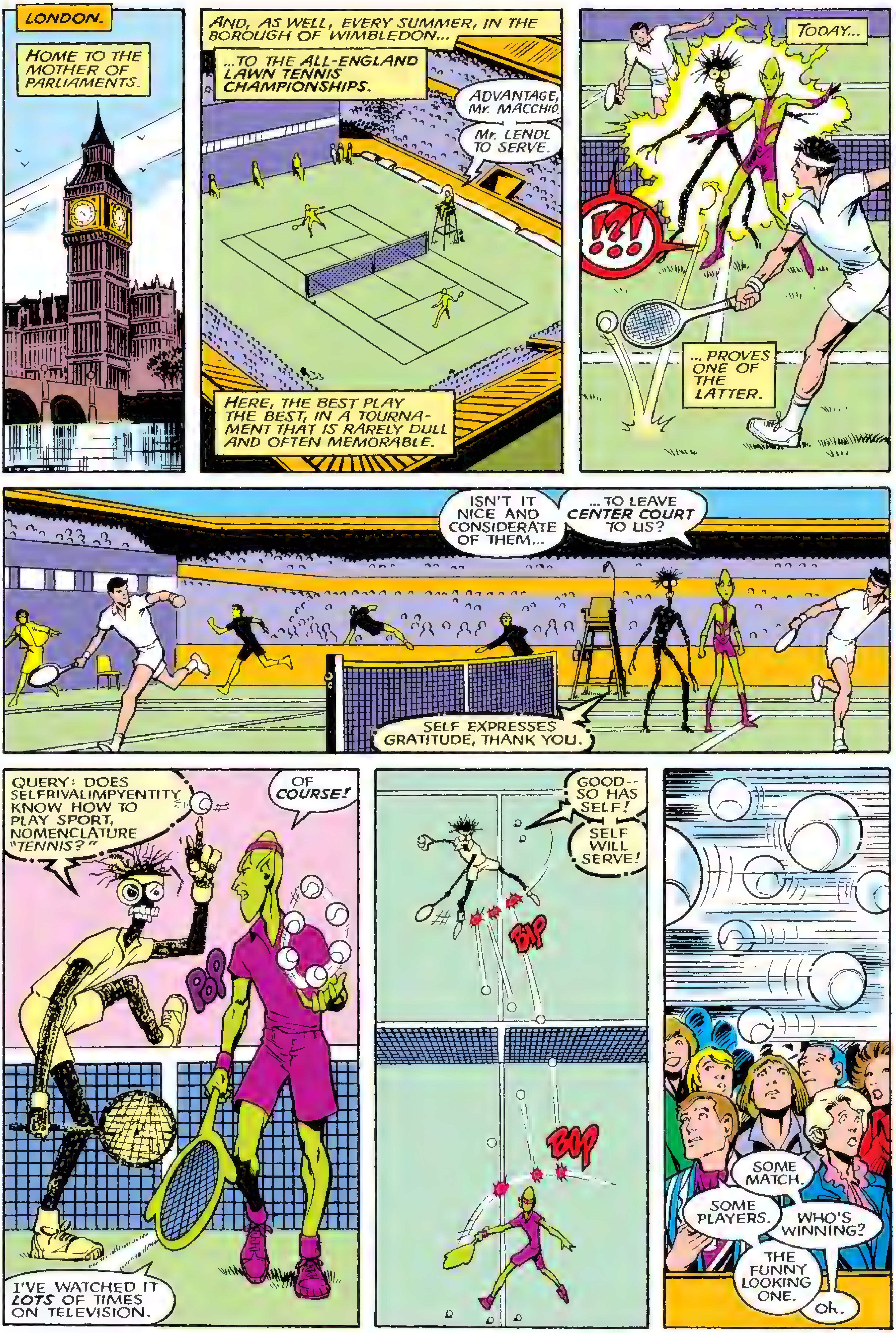

"TELL ME TRULY, MY FRIENDS-- IS NOT *IPANEMA* THE MOST GLORIOUS OF BEACHES--
"--AND ARE NOT THE *CARIOCAS,* THE CITIZENS OF RIO, THE MOST BLESSED OF GOD'S CHILDREN?"
HAVE THESE PEOPLE NO SHAME???
AS THE SAYING GOES, RAHNE: "IF YOU GOT IT, FLAUNT IT."
WITH A VENGEANCE!
CUTE GUYS.
CUTE GALS!
THIS CROWD'S MURDER, DANI! HOW WE GONNA FIND 'EM ON FOOT?
PLEASE, LORD, DON'T LET ANY-ONE NOTICE...
...HOW TIGHT MY SUIT IS!
SIMPLE, SAM.
GATHER CLOSE AROUND RAHNE, EVERY-ONE--
--HIDE HER FROM VIEW--
--BECAUSE *WOLFSBANE'S* GOING TO LEAD THE WAY!
TALLY-HO-- SHE'S GOT A SCENT!

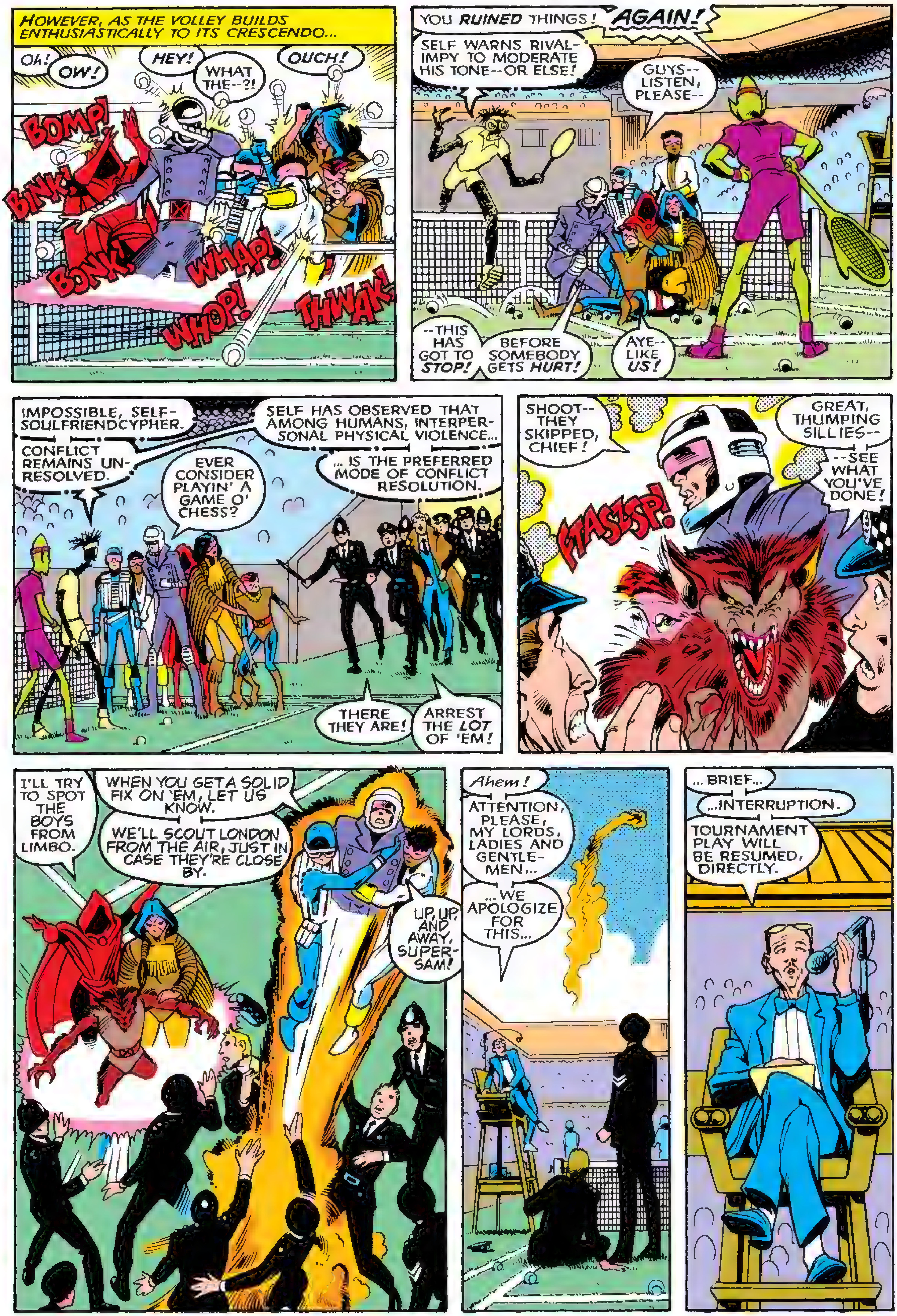

'SCUSE US!
THERE SHE GOES!
GANGWAY!
SORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR!
"LEASH KIDS, NOT DOGS" -- GIMME A *BREAK!*
COMIN' THROUGH!
YES, MA'AM, SHE *IS* OURS, THAT'S WHY WE'RE TRYING TO *CATCH* HER!
SHE'S HEADIN' FOR THAT CROWD!
THEY'RE ALL GIRLS!
I *HATE* THIS -- IS *EVERY* WOMAN IN BOBBY'S LOUSY COUNTRY *BEAUTIFUL?!?*
AND WHAT THE HECK ARE THEY YELLING ABOUT?
GOT A FIX ON RAHNE?
PSI-LINK'S BROKEN--
--*UHNFF*--
--SHE MUST HAVE--
--*SHOVE*--
--SHIFTED BACK TO *HUMAN!*
AT LAST!
SAM! I FOUND...
...HER.
GLORY!
HALLELUJAH!
!
WHO CARES--
-- SO LONG AS I CAN TAKE HIM HOME WITH ME.
WHO IS THAT?
HATE TO SAY IT, CHIEF, BUT YOU MAY HAVE TO FIGHT FOR THAT PRIVILEGE.
YAY!
MORE!
LESS!
ENCORE!
I *LOVE* YOU!
TELEPHONE, 55.51.081!
WOO-*WHOO!*

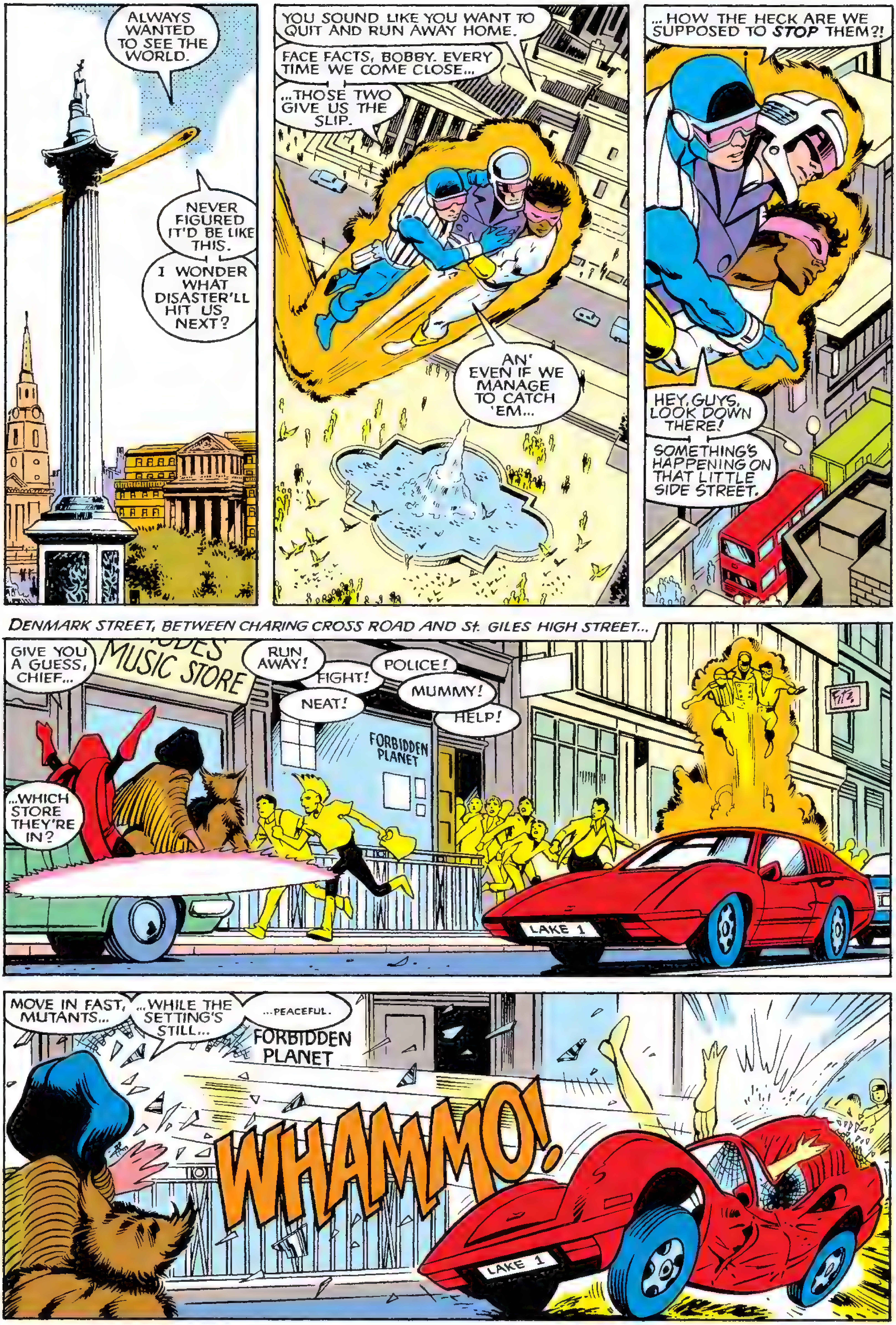

DON'T GO AWAY, LADY EARTHLINGS.
CONCURRENT STATEMENT:
...THE *BEST* IS YET TO COME.
HOW STRANGE THEY TALK.
WITH BODIES LIKE THAT...
...DOES IT MATTER?
RAH RAH!
My hero
ANYTIME ANYWHERE ANYTHING
My heart
Ohh BABY!
LOVE LUST DESIRE
THIS ONE FOR ME!
My Ideal
DANI.
I KNOW, DOUG.
I RECOGNIZE THE VOICE.
WARLOCK!
SALUTATIONS, CHIEFRIENDANI!
RIVALIMPY AND SELF ARE ENGAGED IN A CONTEST...
...TO DETERMINE WHICH IS THE SUPERIOR SENTIENT ENTITY.
WITH A BEAUTY CONTEST?
NOT ANYMORE, YOU AREN'T, BUSTER! THIS SHOW IS *OVER*--!
THE DEVIL IT IS!
MIND YOUR MANNERS, GIRL!
AND YOUR PLACE!
HANDS OFF THE CONTESTANTS!
SELF HAS ACHIEVED A SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED LEVEL...
POP
...OF SUSTAINED POSITIVE AUDIENCE FEEDBACK.
BIG DEAL.
TOP *THIS*, FUNNY-FACE!

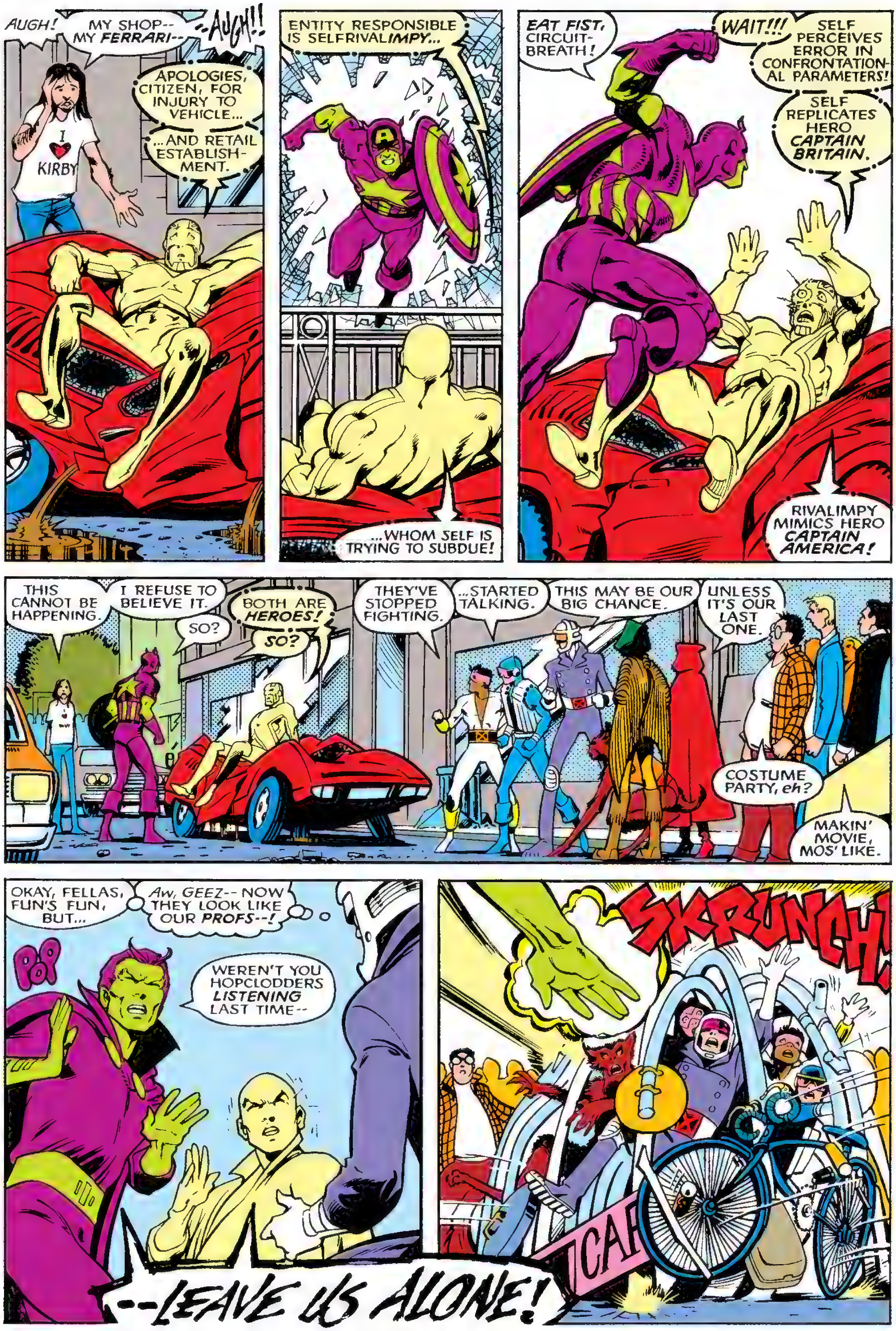

DANI! PEOPLE ARE THROWING THEIR *CLOTHES!*
I KNOW THE FEELING, KIDDO.
BE STILL MY HEART!
THIS IS GETTIN' OUTTA HAND!
YEAH! AIN'T IT *GREAT?!*
AIN'T GREAT. AIN'T RIGHT. AIN'T DECENT. AIN'T NICE!
AH'M NOT DOIN' THIS FOR MYSELF, FELLAS--
WHA--?!
HOLA!
A ROCKET MAN!
VROOSH!
--BUT FOR EVERY MAN ON THIS BEACH WHOSE GAL Y'ALL ARE DRIVIN' TO DISTRACTION!
HE'S STEALING OUR SWEETIES!
ONLY REMEDY FOR SUCH A STATE AN' SITUATION--
--IS A GOOD, COLD *DUNKIN'!*
SPLAASH!
ALARM! INTERACTION WITH AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT DISCONCERTING COSMETIC CIRCUITRY ELEMENTS! SELF IS REVERTING TO BASIC FORM!
HAH!
I LOOKED BETTER LONGER!
I WIN!
TRIUMPH INAPPROPRIATELY PREMATURE.
SELF PERCEIVES ONGOING DYNAMIC DESTABILIZATION OF RIVALIMPYENTITY'S PHYSIOGNOMY.
ARGH!
THE WATER'S WASHING OFF MY MAKEUP!
NO FAIR!!
THEM'S THE BREAKS, LI'L GUY!
Y'ALL FINISHED WITH THIS FOOLISHNESS?
YOU READY MAYBE TO CALL THINGS QUITS?
POP

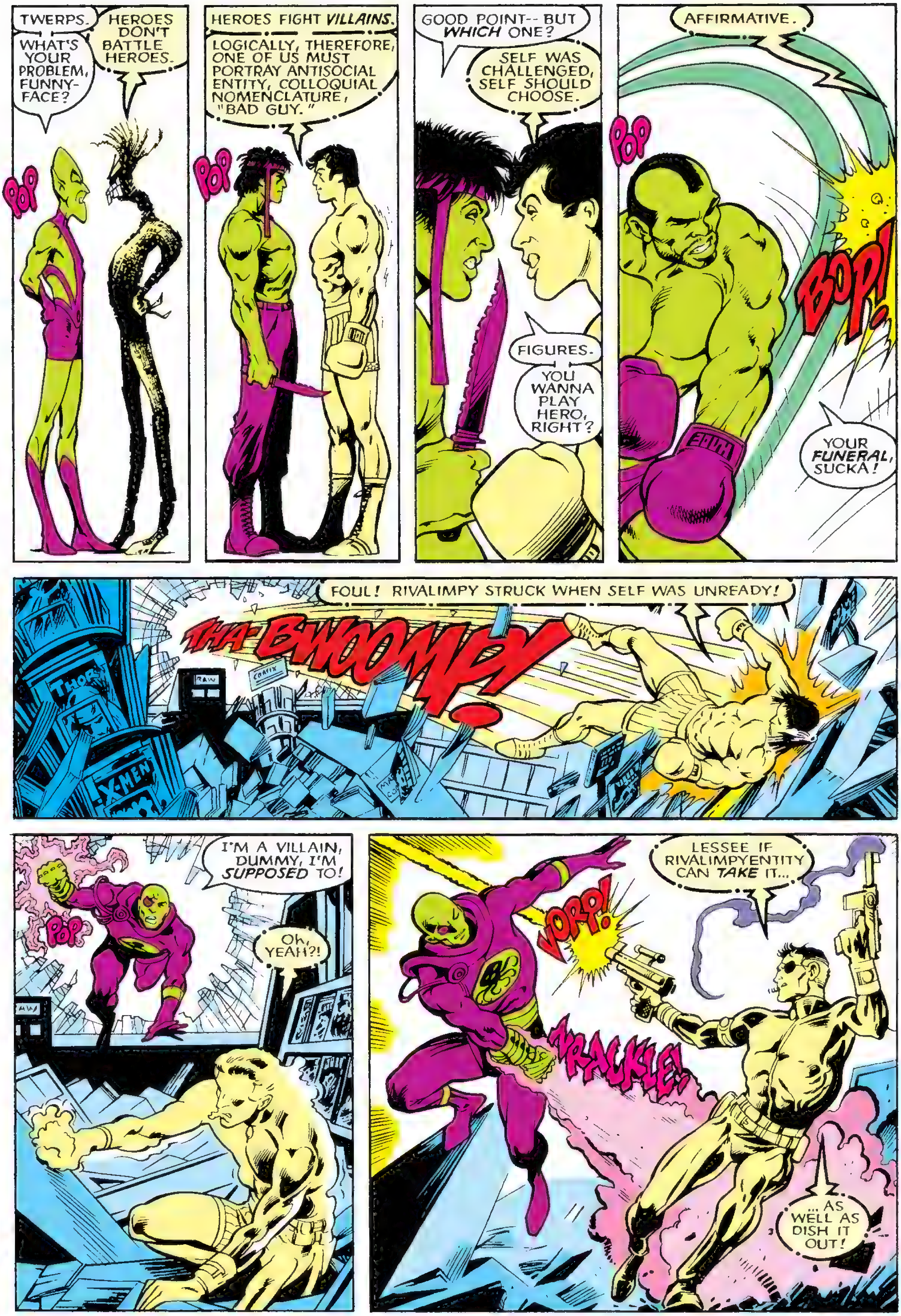

OBSERVATION:
SELF'S CRANIAL EXTREMITY HAS INTERFACED WITH EDIBLE SEMI-SOLID, NOMENCLATURE "ICE CREAM."
OW!
CONCLUSION: WE ARE BEING BOMBARDED WITH PROJECTILES.
LIARS!
SWINE!
CHEATS!
CADS!
RECREANTS!
MENDICANTS!
BOUNDERS!
LOCAL INDIGENOUS LIFEFORMS REGISTERING EXTREME HOSTILE INTENT.
KILL!
HURT!
MAIM!
RIP!
TEAR!
CUT!
CHOP!
DISMEMBER!
GOUGE!
BURN!
SHOOT!
BEAT!
HIT!
SUGGEST IMMEDIATE RELOCATION TO MORE CONGENIAL LOCATION.
THIS IS YOUR FAULT!
WE'D HAVE SETTLED THINGS--
- I'D HAVE WON--
--IF YOU HADN'T INTERFERED!
MESS UP OUR CONTEST ONE MORE TIME--
--AND YOU'LL BE SORRY!
FTASZSP!
THEY--DISAPPEARED!
THE OTHER LOOKED LIKE MY SON'S ERECTOR SET!
ONE WAS GREEN!
WERE THEY HUMAN?
THINK WE SHOULD TAKE IMPY'S HINT?
I WISH THEY'D COME BACK...
...AND BE BEAUTIFUL AGAIN--
-JUST FOR ME.
SINCE WHEN HAVE WE EVER BEEN THAT SENSIBLE?
ONWARD, ILLYANA!
TO THE BITTER END!

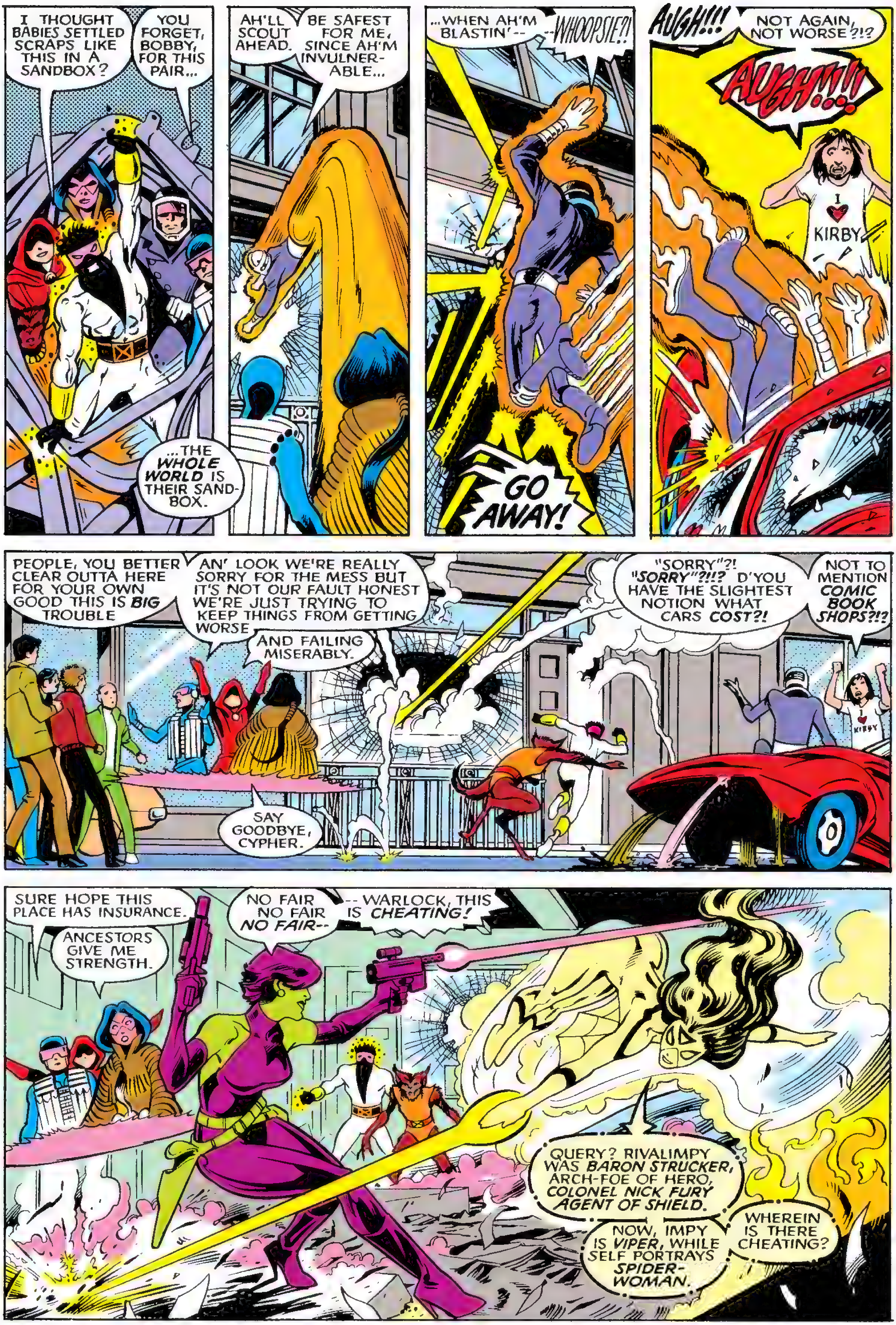

LONDON.
HOME TO THE MOTHER OF PARLIAMENTS.
AND, AS WELL, EVERY SUMMER, IN THE BOROUGH OF WIMBLEDON...
...TO THE ALL-ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS.
ADVANTAGE, Mr. MACCHIO.
Mr. LENDL TO SERVE.
HERE, THE BEST PLAY THE BEST, IN A TOURNAMENT THAT IS RARELY DULL AND OFTEN MEMORABLE.
TODAY...
!?!
...PROVES ONE OF THE LATTER.
ISN'T IT NICE AND CONSIDERATE OF THEM...
...TO LEAVE CENTER COURT TO US?
SELF EXPRESSES GRATITUDE, THANK YOU.
QUERY: DOES SELFRIVALIMPYENTITY KNOW HOW TO PLAY SPORT, NOMENCLATURE "TENNIS?"
OF COURSE!
POP
I'VE WATCHED IT LOTS OF TIMES ON TELEVISION.
GOOD-- SO HAS SELF!
SELF WILL SERVE!
BIP
BOP
SOME MATCH.
SOME PLAYERS.
WHO'S WINNING?
THE FUNNY LOOKING ONE.
Oh.

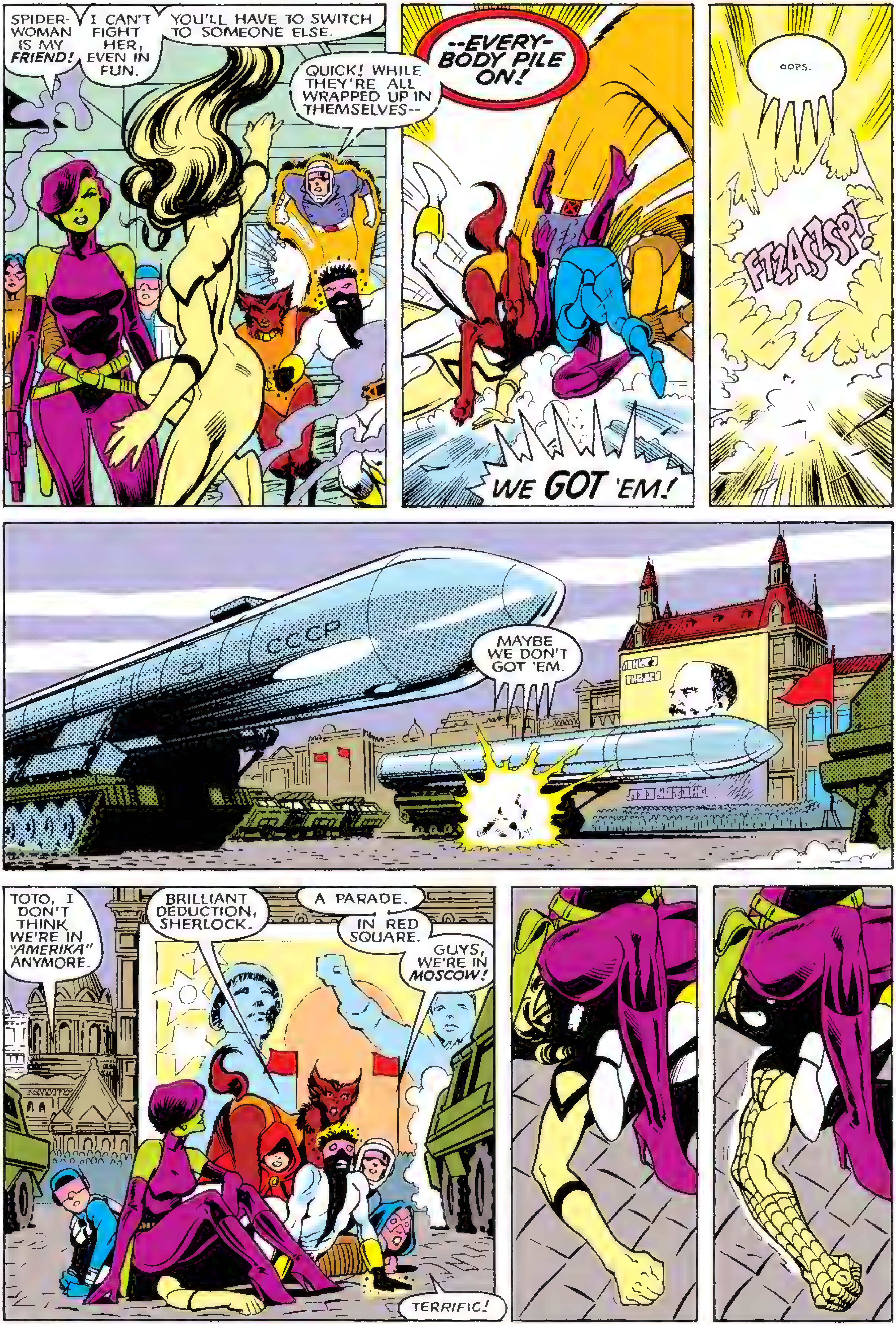

HOWEVER, AS THE VOLLEY BUILDS ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO ITS CRESCENDO...
Oh!
OW!
HEY!
WHAT THE--?!
OUCH!
BOMP!
BINK!
BONK!
WHAP!
WHOP!
THWAK!
YOU RUINED THINGS!
AGAIN!
SELF WARNS RIVAL-IMPY TO MODERATE HIS TONE--OR ELSE!
GUYS--LISTEN, PLEASE--
--THIS HAS GOT TO STOP!
BEFORE SOMEBODY GETS HURT!
AYE--LIKE US!
IMPOSSIBLE, SELF-SOULFRIENDCYPHER.
CONFLICT REMAINS UNRESOLVED.
SELF HAS OBSERVED THAT AMONG HUMANS, INTERPERSONAL PHYSICAL VIOLENCE...
... IS THE PREFERRED MODE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION.
EVER CONSIDER PLAYIN' A GAME O' CHESS?
THERE THEY ARE!
ARREST THE LOT OF 'EM!
SHOOT--THEY SKIPPED, CHIEF!
FTASZSP!
GREAT, THUMPING SILLIES--
--SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
I'LL TRY TO SPOT THE BOYS FROM LIMBO.
WHEN YOU GET A SOLID FIX ON 'EM, LET US KNOW.
WE'LL SCOUT LONDON FROM THE AIR, JUST IN CASE THEY'RE CLOSE BY.
UP, UP, AND AWAY, SUPER-SAM!
Ahem!
ATTENTION, PLEASE, MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
... WE APOLOGIZE FOR THIS...
... BRIEF...
...INTERRUPTION.
TOURNAMENT PLAY WILL BE RESUMED, DIRECTLY.

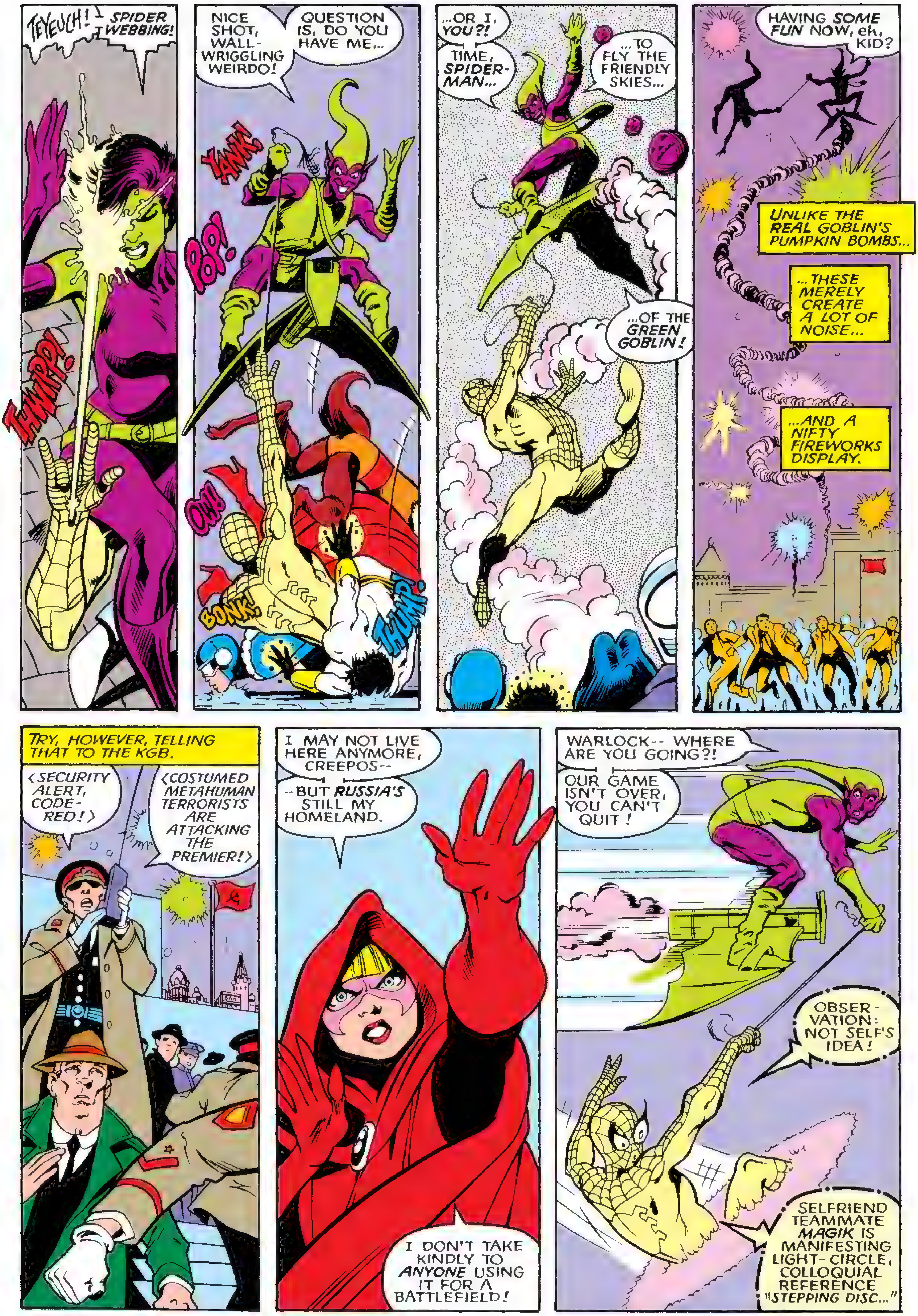

ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THE WORLD.
NEVER FIGURED IT'D BE LIKE THIS.
I WONDER WHAT DISASTER'LL HIT US NEXT?
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU WANT TO QUIT AND RUN AWAY HOME.
FACE FACTS, BOBBY. EVERY TIME WE COME CLOSE...
...THOSE TWO GIVE US THE SLIP.
AN' EVEN IF WE MANAGE TO CATCH 'EM...
...HOW THE HECK ARE WE SUPPOSED TO STOP THEM?!
HEY, GUYS, LOOK DOWN THERE!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING ON THAT LITTLE SIDE STREET.
DENMARK STREET, BETWEEN CHARING CROSS ROAD AND St. GILES HIGH STREET...
GIVE YOU A GUESS, CHIEF...
MUSIC STORE
RUN AWAY!
FIGHT!
POLICE!
NEAT!
MUMMY!
HELP!
FORBIDDEN PLANET
...WHICH STORE THEY'RE IN?
LAKE 1
MOVE IN FAST, MUTANTS...
...WHILE THE SETTING'S STILL...
...PEACEFUL.
FORBIDDEN PLANET
WHAMMO!
LAKE 1


AUGH!
MY SHOP-- MY *FERRARI*--
AUGH!!
APOLOGIES, CITIZEN, FOR INJURY TO VEHICLE...
...AND RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT.
I ♥ KIRBY
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE IS SELFRIVAL*IMPY*...
...WHOM SELF IS TRYING TO SUBDUE!
EAT FIST, CIRCUIT-BREATH!
WAIT!!!
SELF PERCEIVES ERROR IN CONFRONTATIONAL PARAMETERS!
SELF REPLICATES HERO *CAPTAIN BRITAIN*.
RIVALIMPY MIMICS HERO *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*
THIS CANNOT BE HAPPENING.
I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT.
SO?
BOTH ARE *HEROES!*
SO?
THEY'VE STOPPED FIGHTING.
...STARTED TALKING.
THIS MAY BE OUR BIG CHANCE.
UNLESS IT'S OUR LAST ONE.
COSTUME PARTY, *eh?*
MAKIN' MOVIE, MOS' LIKE.
OKAY, FELLAS, FUN'S FUN, BUT...
Aw, GEEZ-- NOW THEY LOOK LIKE OUR *PROFS*--!
POP
WEREN'T YOU HOPCLODDERS *LISTENING* LAST TIME--
--LEAVE US ALONE!
SKRUNCH!
CAF

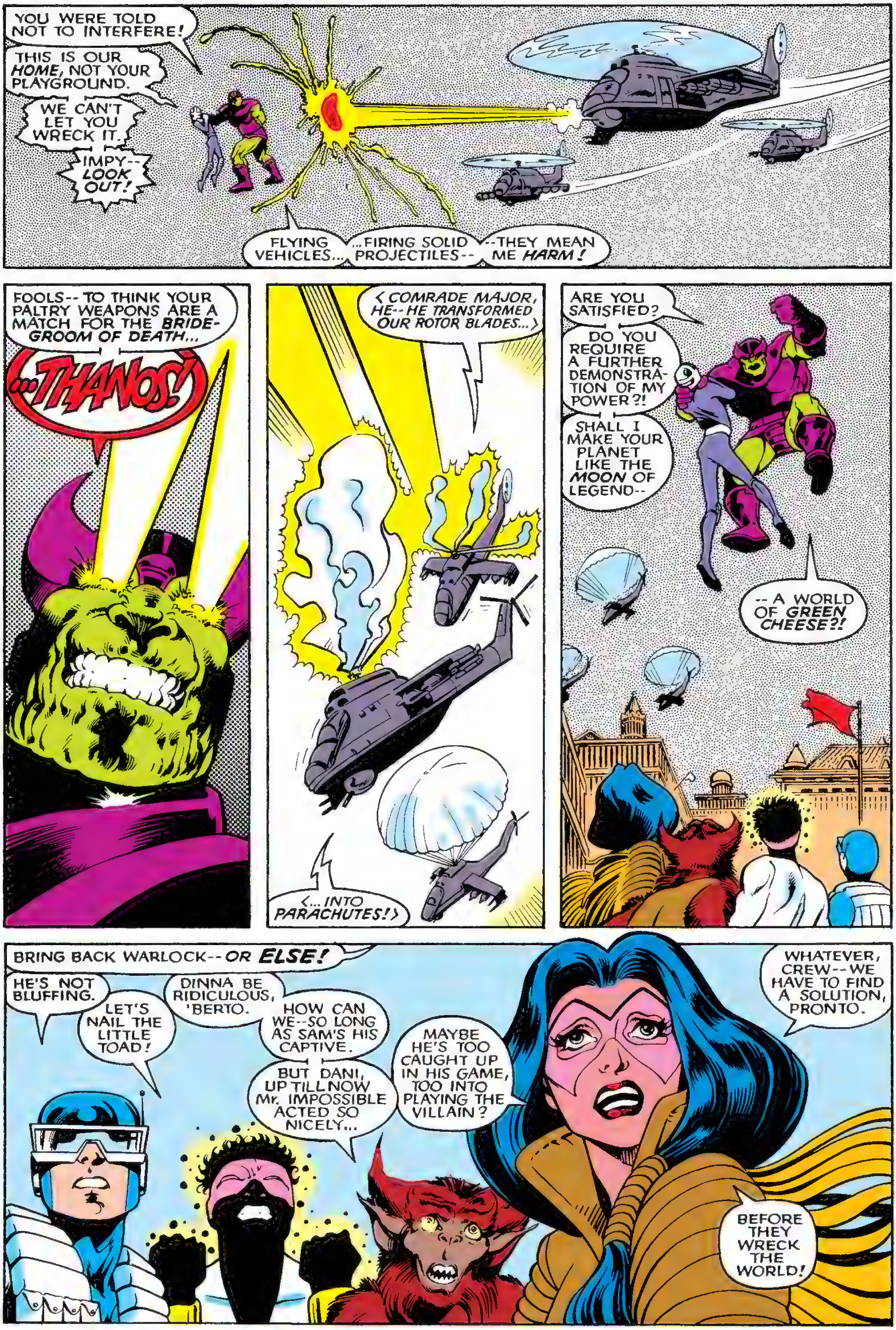

TWERPS.
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, FUNNY-FACE?
HEROES DON'T BATTLE HEROES.
POP
HEROES FIGHT VILLAINS.
LOGICALLY, THEREFORE, ONE OF US MUST PORTRAY ANTISOCIAL ENTITY, COLLOQUIAL NOMENCLATURE, "BAD GUY."
POP
GOOD POINT-- BUT WHICH ONE?
SELF WAS CHALLENGED, SELF SHOULD CHOOSE.
FIGURES.
YOU WANNA PLAY HERO, RIGHT?
AFFIRMATIVE.
POP
BOP!
YOUR FUNERAL, SUCKA!
FOUL! RIVALIMPY STRUCK WHEN SELF WAS UNREADY!
THA-BWOOMP!
THOR
X-MEN
RAW
COMIX
I'M A VILLAIN, DUMMY, I'M SUPPOSED TO!
POP
Oh, YEAH?!
LESSEE IF RIVALIMPYENTITY CAN TAKE IT...
VORP!
KRACKLE!
...AS WELL AS DISH IT OUT!

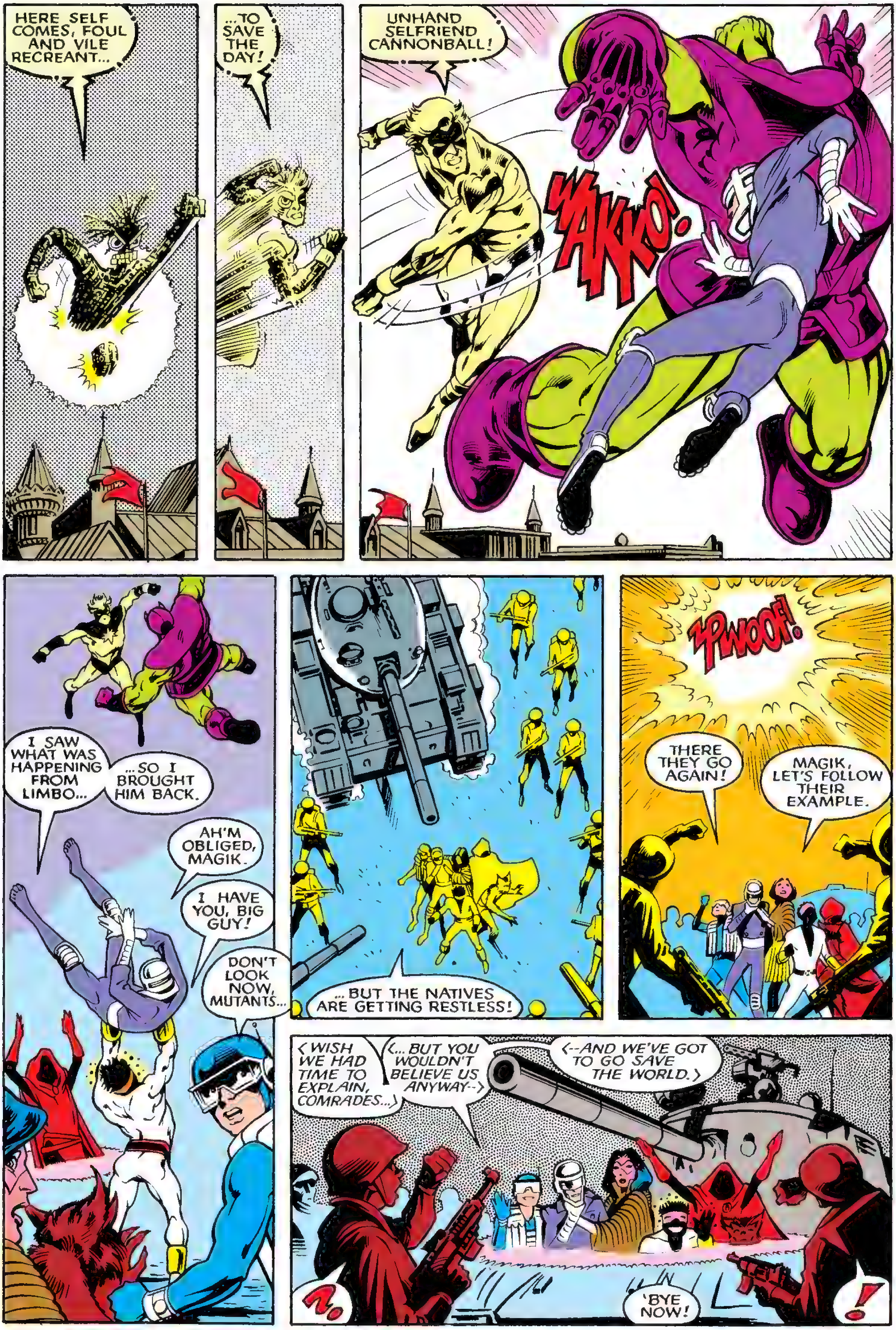

I THOUGHT BABIES SETTLED SCRAPS LIKE THIS IN A SANDBOX?
YOU FORGET, BOBBY, FOR THIS PAIR...
...THE *WHOLE WORLD* IS THEIR SANDBOX.
AH'LL SCOUT AHEAD.
BE SAFEST FOR ME, SINCE AH'M INVULNERABLE...
...WHEN AH'M BLASTIN'--
--WHOOPSIE?!
GO AWAY!
AUGH!!!
NOT AGAIN, NOT WORSE?!?
AUGH!!!
I ♥ KIRBY
PEOPLE, YOU BETTER CLEAR OUTTA HERE FOR YOUR OWN GOOD THIS IS *BIG* TROUBLE
AN' LOOK WE'RE REALLY SORRY FOR THE MESS BUT IT'S NOT OUR FAULT HONEST WE'RE JUST TRYING TO KEEP THINGS FROM GETTING WORSE
AND FAILING MISERABLY.
SAY GOODBYE, CYPHER.
"SORRY"?! "*SORRY*"?!!? D'YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST NOTION WHAT CARS *COST?!*
NOT TO MENTION *COMIC BOOK SHOPS?!?*
I ♥ KIRBY
SURE HOPE THIS PLACE HAS INSURANCE.
ANCESTORS GIVE ME STRENGTH.
NO FAIR NO FAIR *NO FAIR--*
--WARLOCK, THIS IS *CHEATING!*
QUERY? RIVALIMPY WAS *BARON STRUCKER*, ARCH-FOE OF HERO, *COLONEL NICK FURY AGENT OF SHIELD.*
NOW, IMPY IS *VIPER*, WHILE SELF PORTRAYS *SPIDER-WOMAN.*
WHEREIN IS THERE CHEATING?

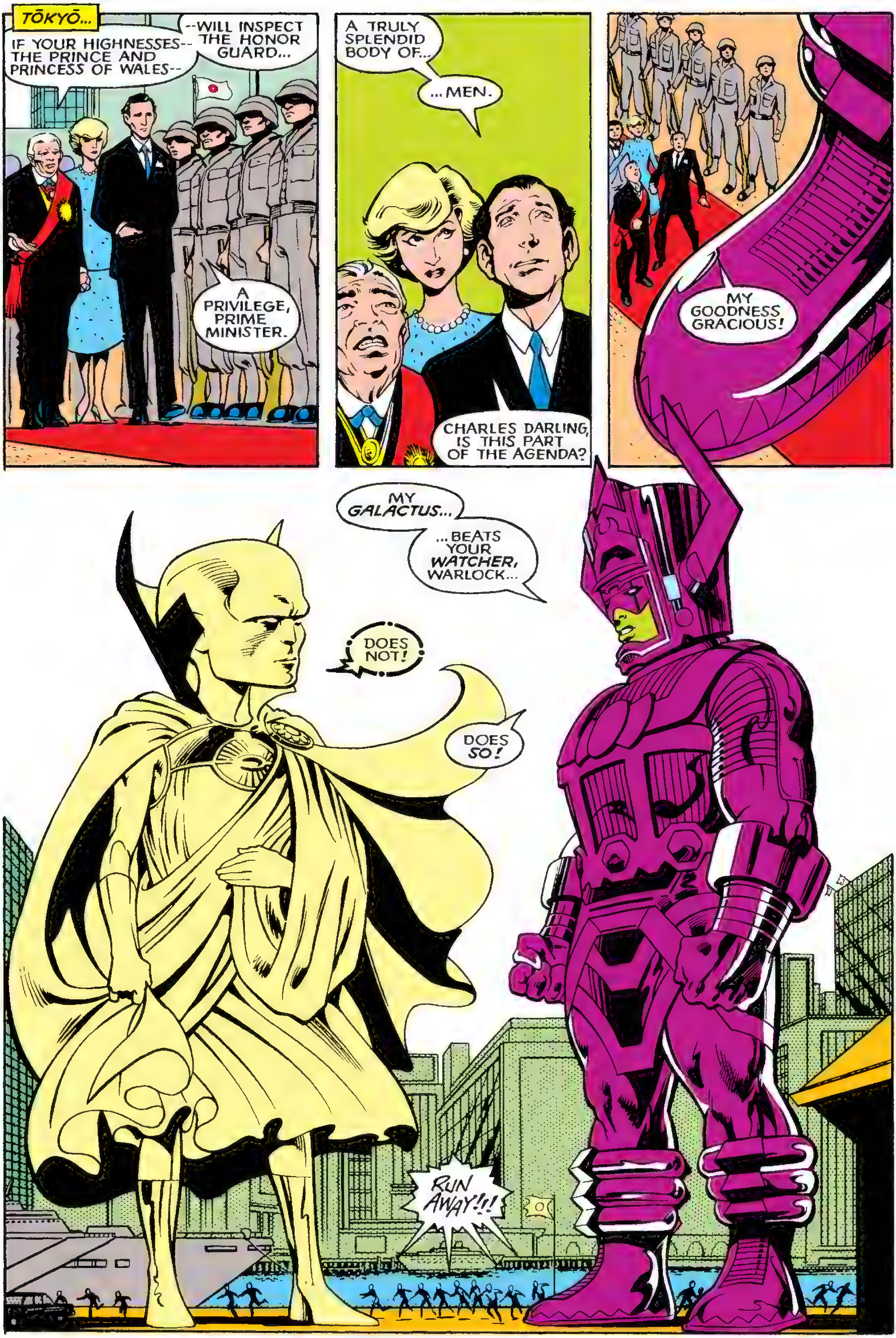

SPIDER-WOMAN IS MY *FRIEND!*
I CAN'T FIGHT HER, EVEN IN FUN.
YOU'LL HAVE TO SWITCH TO SOMEONE ELSE.
QUICK! WHILE THEY'RE ALL WRAPPED UP IN THEMSELVES--
--EVERY-BODY PILE ON!
WE GOT 'EM!
OOPS.
FTZACZSP!
CCCP
MAYBE WE DON'T GOT 'EM.
TOTO, I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN *"AMERIKA"* ANYMORE.
BRILLIANT DEDUCTION, SHERLOCK.
A PARADE.
IN RED SQUARE.
GUYS, WE'RE IN *MOSCOW!*
TERRIFIC!

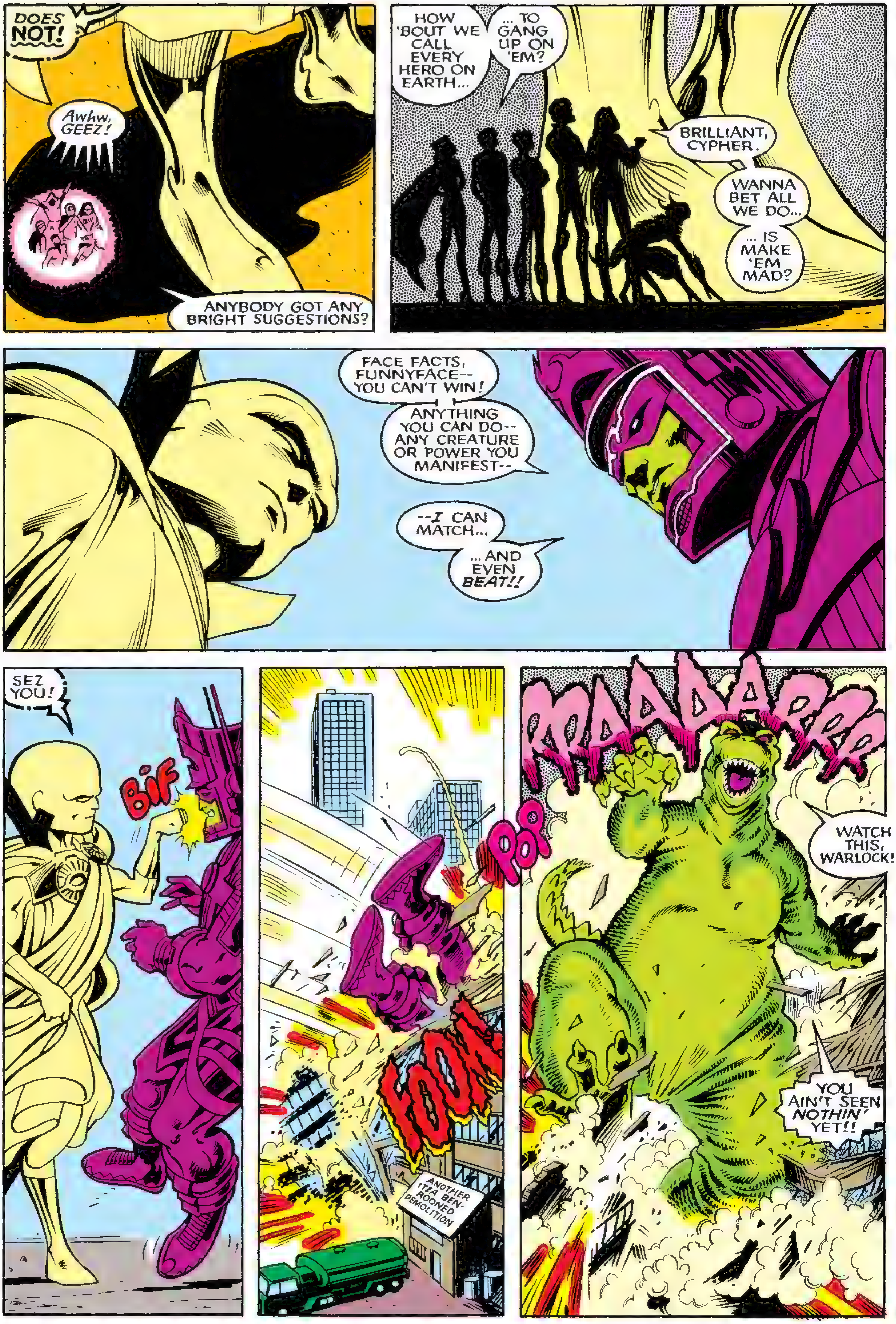

TEYEUCH! SPIDER WEBBING!
THWIPP!
NICE SHOT, WALL-WRIGGLING WEIRDO!
QUESTION IS, DO YOU HAVE ME...
YANK!
POP!
OW!
BONK!
THUMP!
...OR I, YOU?!
TIME, SPIDER-MAN...
...TO FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES...
...OF THE GREEN GOBLIN!
HAVING SOME FUN NOW, eh, KID?
UNLIKE THE REAL GOBLIN'S PUMPKIN BOMBS...
...THESE MERELY CREATE A LOT OF NOISE...
...AND A NIFTY FIREWORKS DISPLAY.
TRY, HOWEVER, TELLING THAT TO THE KGB.
‹SECURITY ALERT, CODE-RED!›
‹COSTUMED METAHUMAN TERRORISTS ARE ATTACKING THE PREMIER!›
I MAY NOT LIVE HERE ANYMORE, CREEPOS--
--BUT RUSSIA'S STILL MY HOMELAND.
I DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO ANYONE USING IT FOR A BATTLEFIELD!
WARLOCK-- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
OUR GAME ISN'T OVER, YOU CAN'T QUIT!
OBSERVATION: NOT SELF'S IDEA!
SELFRIEND TEAMMATE MAGIK IS MANIFESTING LIGHT-CIRCLE, COLLOQUIAL REFERENCE "STEPPING DISC..."

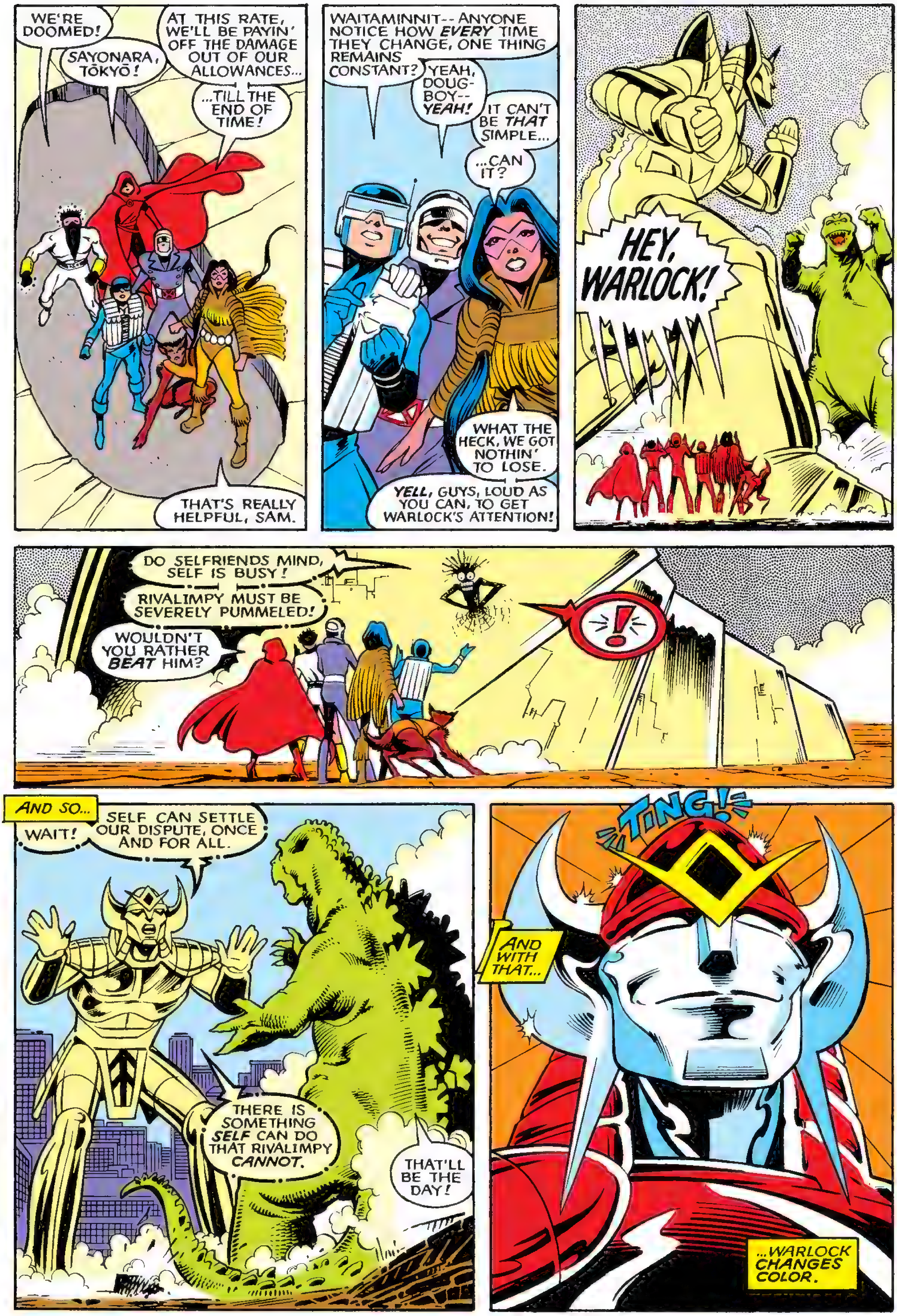
...TO TELEPORT SELF TO HER EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL ARCANE REALM, *LIMBO.*
NOW, FUNNYBUNNY, YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE OURSELVES A LITTLE CHAT.
WARLOCK!
DO YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST NOTION...
...OF THE *TROUBLE* YOU'VE CAUSED?!!
MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH...
WHERE'S WARLOCK, WHERE'S MY FRIEND?!
WHERE HE CAN'T DO ANY MORE HARM.
QUIT FOOLIN' AROUND, FELLA--
--THIS AIN'T FUN, ANYMOR
RGRGK!
POP!
I QUITE AGREE!

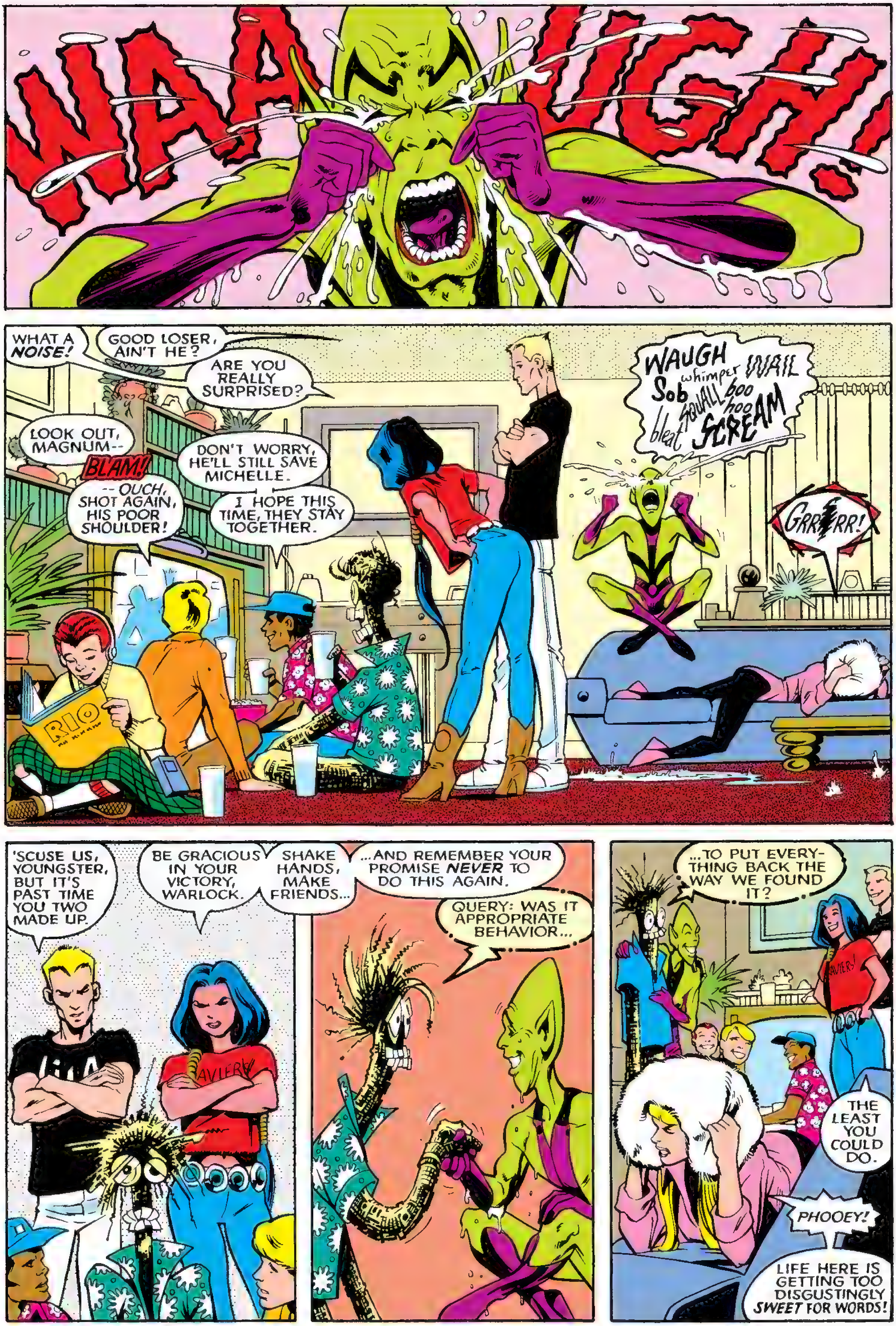

YOU WERE TOLD NOT TO INTERFERE!
THIS IS OUR *HOME*, NOT YOUR PLAYGROUND.
WE CAN'T LET YOU WRECK IT.
IMPY-- *LOOK OUT!*
FLYING VEHICLES...
...FIRING SOLID PROJECTILES--
--THEY MEAN ME *HARM!*
FOOLS-- TO THINK YOUR PALTRY WEAPONS ARE A MATCH FOR THE *BRIDE-GROOM OF DEATH...*
...*THANOS!*
<*COMRADE MAJOR, HE-- HE TRANSFORMED OUR ROTOR BLADES...*>
<...*INTO PARACHUTES!*>
ARE YOU SATISFIED?
DO YOU REQUIRE A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF MY POWER?!
SHALL I MAKE YOUR PLANET LIKE THE *MOON* OF LEGEND--
-- A WORLD OF *GREEN CHEESE?!*
BRING BACK WARLOCK-- *OR ELSE!*
HE'S NOT BLUFFING.
LET'S NAIL THE LITTLE TOAD!
DINNA BE RIDICULOUS, 'BERTO.
HOW CAN WE--SO LONG AS SAM'S HIS CAPTIVE.
BUT DANI, UP TILL NOW Mr. IMPOSSIBLE ACTED SO NICELY...
MAYBE HE'S TOO CAUGHT UP IN HIS GAME, TOO INTO PLAYING THE VILLAIN?
WHATEVER, CREW-- WE HAVE TO FIND A SOLUTION, PRONTO.
BEFORE THEY WRECK THE WORLD!

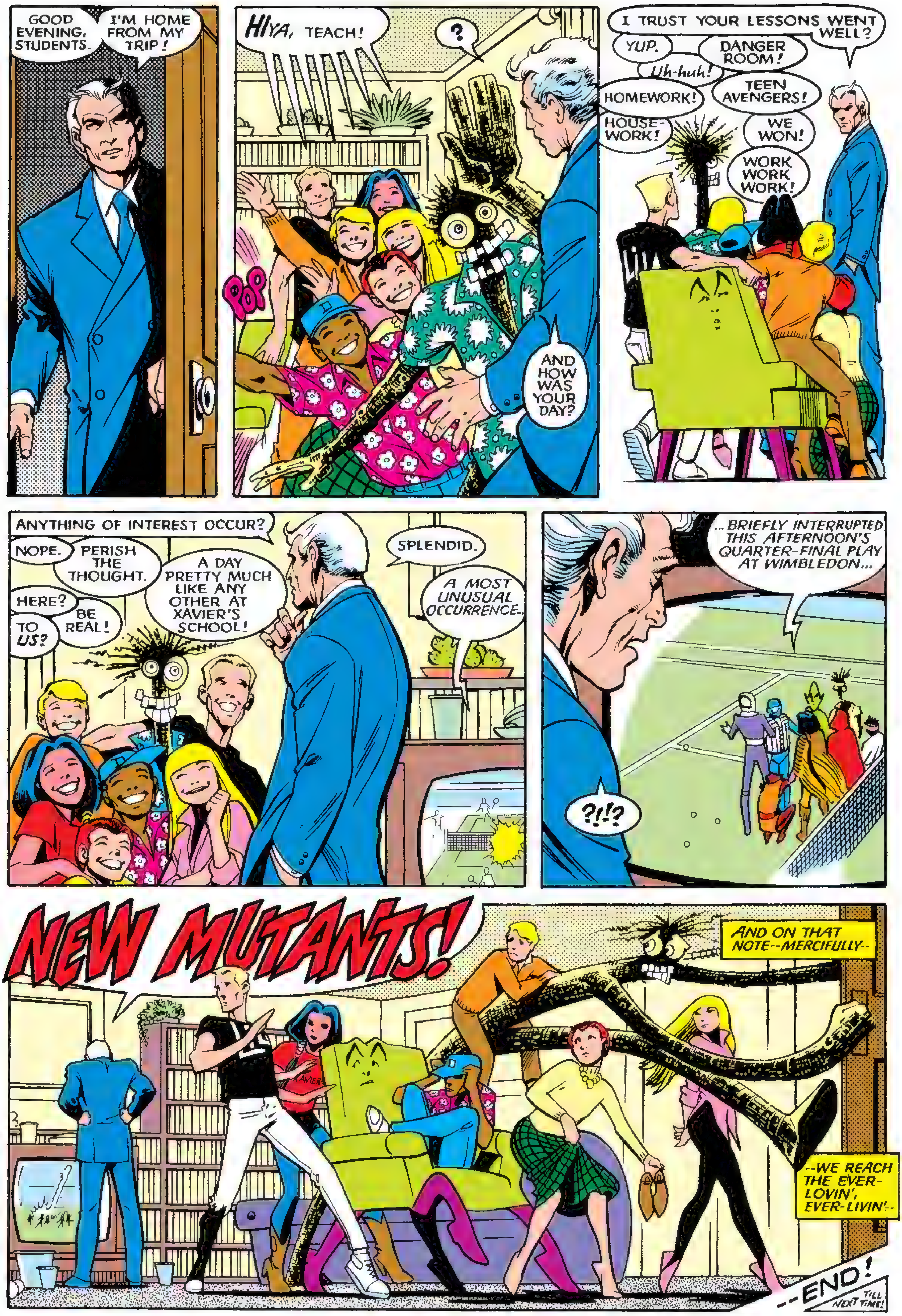

HERE SELF COMES, FOUL AND VILE RECREANT...
...TO SAVE THE DAY!
UNHAND SELFRIEND CANNONBALL!
WAKKO!
I SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING FROM LIMBO...
...SO I BROUGHT HIM BACK.
AH'M OBLIGED, MAGIK.
I HAVE YOU, BIG GUY!
DON'T LOOK NOW, MUTANTS...
...BUT THE NATIVES ARE GETTING RESTLESS!
PWOOF!
THERE THEY GO AGAIN!
MAGIK, LET'S FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE.
<WISH WE HAD TIME TO EXPLAIN, COMRADES...>
<...BUT YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE US ANYWAY-->
<--AND WE'VE GOT TO GO SAVE THE WORLD.>
?
'BYE NOW!
!


TŌKYŌ...
IF YOUR HIGHNESSES-- THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES--
--WILL INSPECT THE HONOR GUARD...
A PRIVILEGE, PRIME MINISTER.
A TRULY SPLENDID BODY OF...
...MEN.
CHARLES DARLING, IS THIS PART OF THE AGENDA?
MY GOODNESS GRACIOUS!
MY *GALACTUS*...
...BEATS YOUR *WATCHER*, WARLOCK...
DOES NOT!
DOES *SO!*
RUN AWAY!!!


DOES NOT!
Awhw, GEEZ!
ANYBODY GOT ANY BRIGHT SUGGESTIONS?
HOW 'BOUT WE CALL EVERY HERO ON EARTH...
... TO GANG UP ON 'EM?
BRILLIANT, CYPHER.
WANNA BET ALL WE DO...
... IS MAKE 'EM MAD?
FACE FACTS, FUNNYFACE-- YOU CAN'T WIN!
ANYTHING YOU CAN DO-- ANY CREATURE OR POWER YOU MANIFEST--
--I CAN MATCH...
... AND EVEN BEAT!!
SEZ YOU!
BIF
POP
FOOM
ANOTHER ITZA BEN-ROONED DEMOLITION
RRAAAARRR
WATCH THIS, WARLOCK!
YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET!!


WE'RE DOOMED!
SAYONARA, TŌKYŌ!
AT THIS RATE, WE'LL BE PAYIN' OFF THE DAMAGE OUT OF OUR ALLOWANCES...
...TILL THE END OF TIME!
THAT'S REALLY HELPFUL, SAM.
WAITAMINNIT-- ANYONE NOTICE HOW EVERY TIME THEY CHANGE, ONE THING REMAINS CONSTANT?
YEAH, DOUG-BOY-- YEAH!
IT CAN'T BE THAT SIMPLE...
...CAN IT?
WHAT THE HECK, WE GOT NOTHIN' TO LOSE.
YELL, GUYS, LOUD AS YOU CAN, TO GET WARLOCK'S ATTENTION!
HEY, WARLOCK!
DO SELFRIENDS MIND, SELF IS BUSY!
RIVALIMPY MUST BE SEVERELY PUMMELED!
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER BEAT HIM?
!
AND SO...
WAIT!
SELF CAN SETTLE OUR DISPUTE, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
THERE IS SOMETHING SELF CAN DO THAT RIVALIMPY CANNOT.
THAT'LL BE THE DAY!
TING!
AND WITH THAT...
...WARLOCK CHANGES COLOR.


WAAUGH!
WHAT A *NOISE!*
GOOD LOSER, AIN'T HE?
ARE YOU REALLY SURPRISED?
LOOK OUT, MAGNUM--
BLAM!
--OUCH, SHOT AGAIN, HIS POOR SHOULDER!
DON'T WORRY, HE'LL STILL SAVE MICHELLE.
I HOPE THIS TIME, THEY STAY TOGETHER.
WAUGH Sob whimper WAIL bleat SQUALL boo hoo SCREAM
GRRRRR!
RIO
'SCUSE US, YOUNGSTER, BUT IT'S PAST TIME YOU TWO MADE UP.
BE GRACIOUS IN YOUR VICTORY, WARLOCK.
SHAKE HANDS, MAKE FRIENDS...
...AND REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE *NEVER* TO DO THIS AGAIN.
QUERY: WAS IT APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR...
...TO PUT EVERYTHING BACK THE WAY WE FOUND IT?
THE LEAST YOU COULD DO.
PHOOEY!
LIFE HERE IS GETTING TOO DISGUSTINGLY *SWEET* FOR WORDS!


GOOD EVENING, STUDENTS.
I'M HOME FROM MY TRIP!
HIYA, TEACH!
?
POP
AND HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
I TRUST YOUR LESSONS WENT WELL?
YUP.
DANGER ROOM!
Uh-huh!
HOMEWORK!
TEEN AVENGERS!
HOUSE-WORK!
WE WON!
WORK WORK WORK!
ANYTHING OF INTEREST OCCUR?
NOPE.
PERISH THE THOUGHT.
A DAY PRETTY MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER AT XAVIER'S SCHOOL!
HERE?
BE REAL!
TO US?
SPLENDID.
A MOST UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE...
...BRIEFLY INTERRUPTED THIS AFTERNOON'S QUARTER-FINAL PLAY AT WIMBLEDON...
?!!?
NEW MUTANTS!
AND ON THAT NOTE--MERCIFULLY--
--WE REACH THE EVER-LOVIN', EVER-LIVIN'--
XAVIER
--END!
TILL NEXT TIME!

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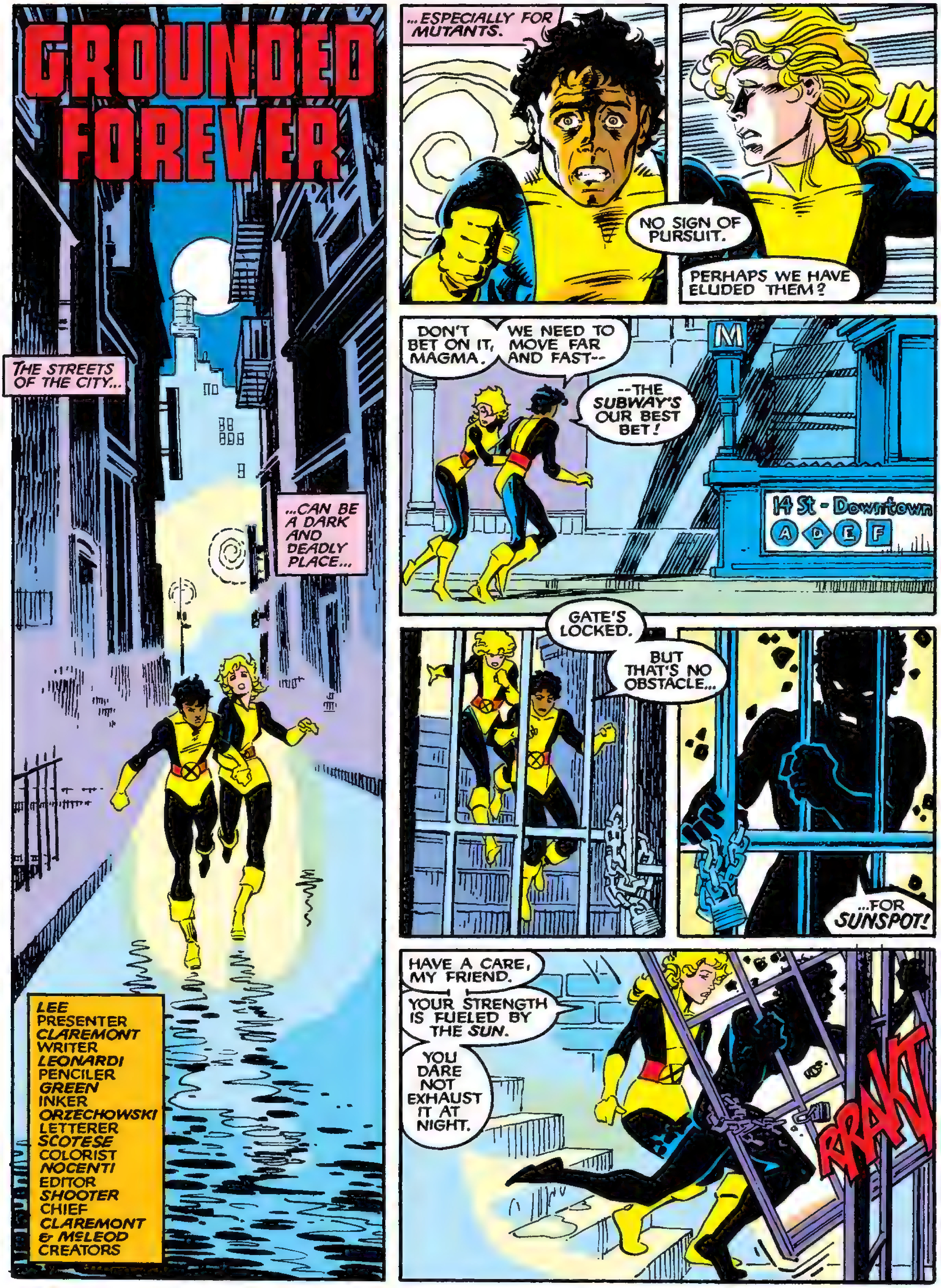
GROUNDED FOREVER
THE STREETS OF THE CITY...
...CAN BE A DARK AND DEADLY PLACE...
LEE PRESENTER
CLAREMONT WRITER
LEONARDI PENCILER
GREEN INKER
ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
SCOTESE COLORIST
NOCENTI EDITOR
SHOOTER CHIEF
CLAREMONT & McLEOD CREATORS
...ESPECIALLY FOR MUTANTS.
NO SIGN OF PURSUIT.
PERHAPS WE HAVE ELUDED THEM?
DON'T BET ON IT, MAGMA.
WE NEED TO MOVE FAR AND FAST--
--THE SUBWAY'S OUR BEST BET!
M
14 St - Downtown
A D E F
GATE'S LOCKED.
BUT THAT'S NO OBSTACLE...
...FOR SUNSPOT!
HAVE A CARE, MY FRIEND.
YOUR STRENGTH IS FUELED BY THE SUN.
YOU DARE NOT EXHAUST IT AT NIGHT.
RRAKT

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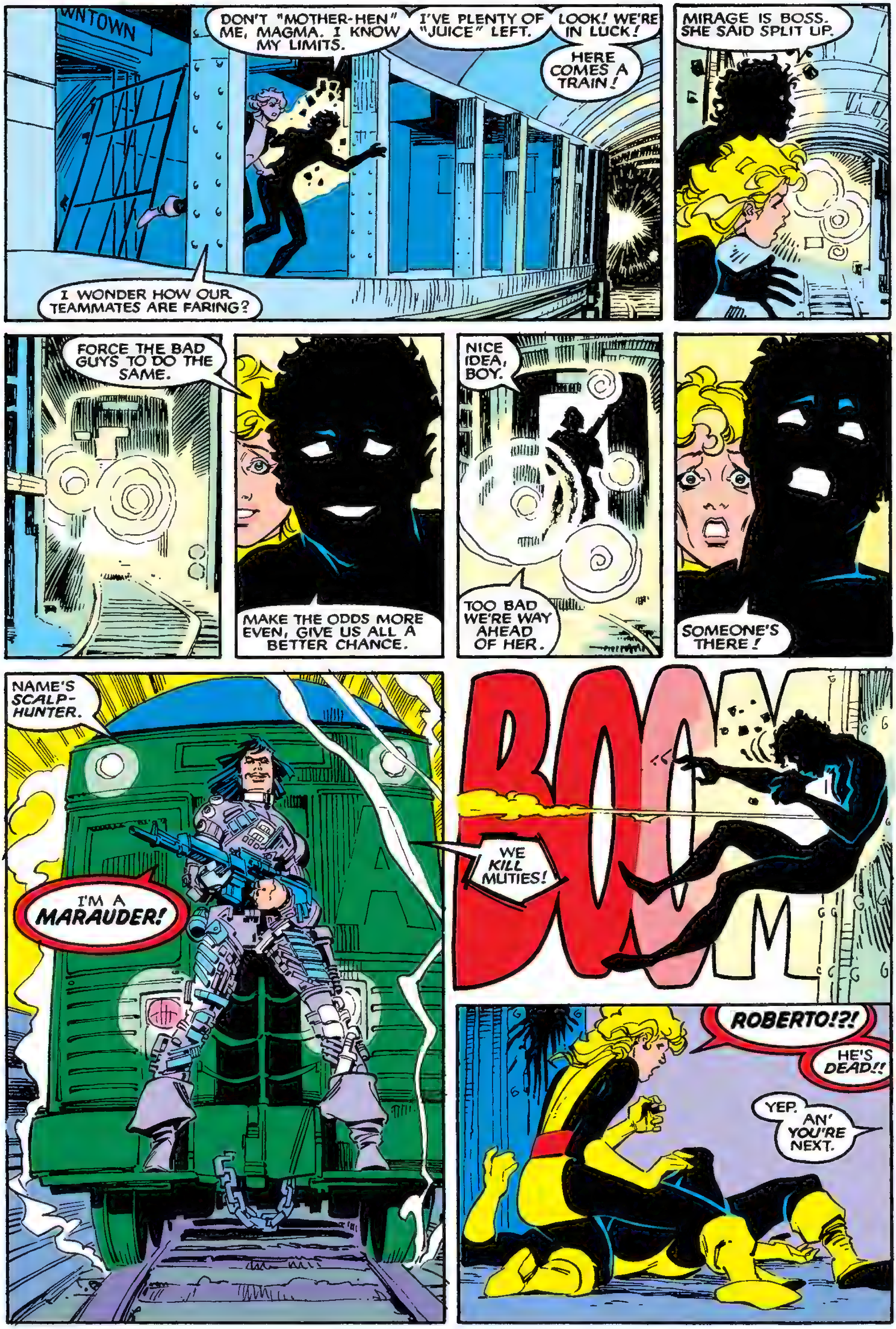
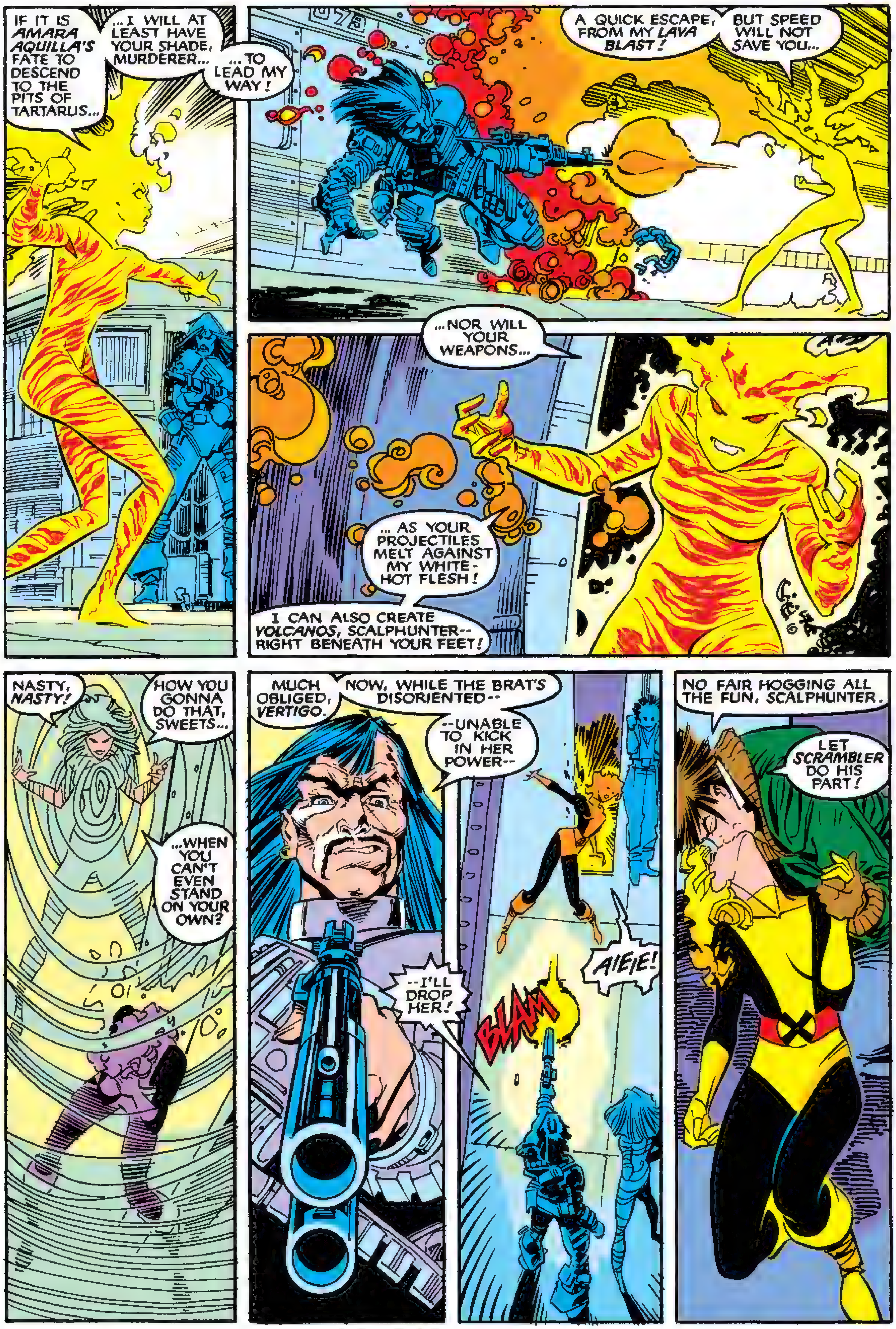
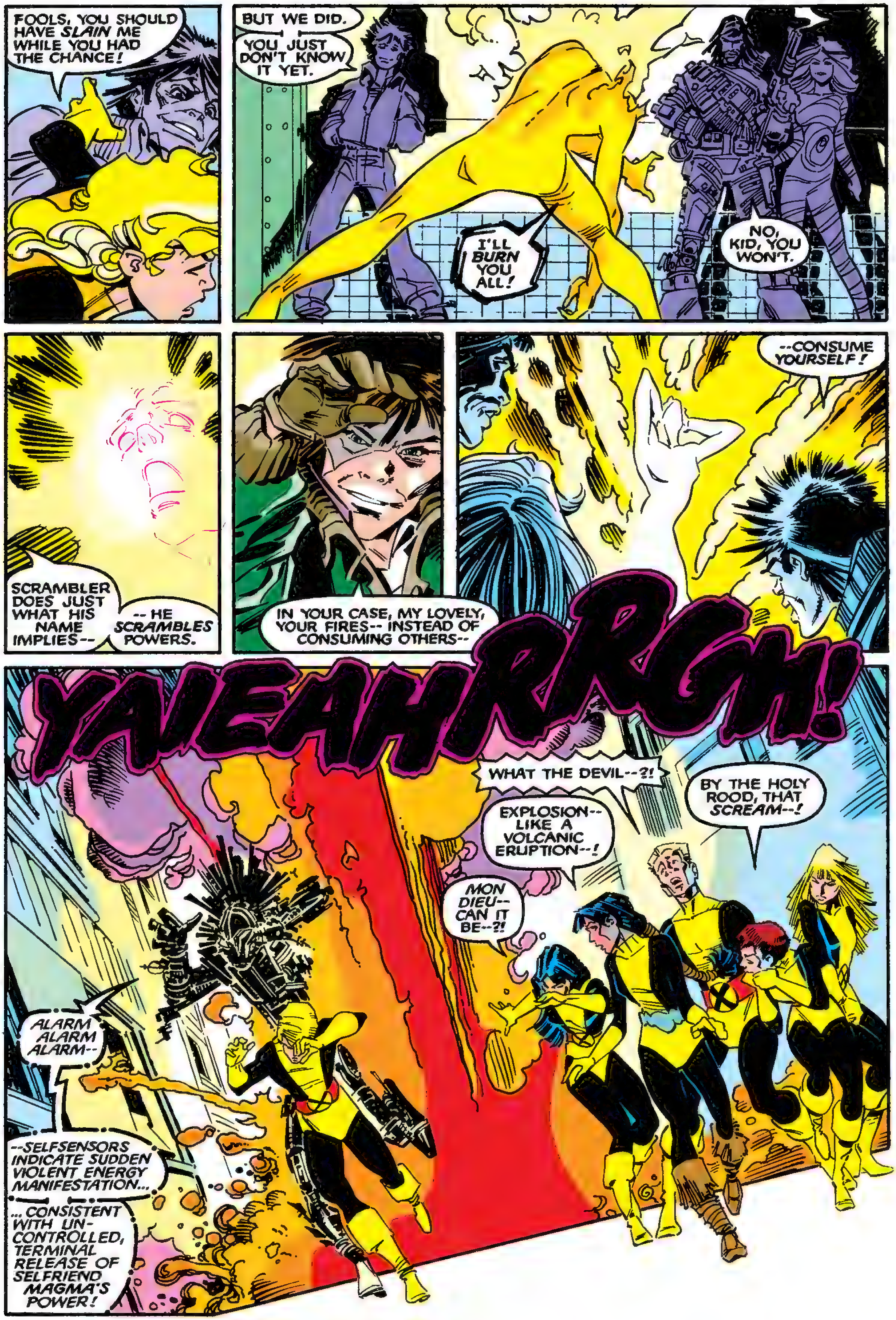
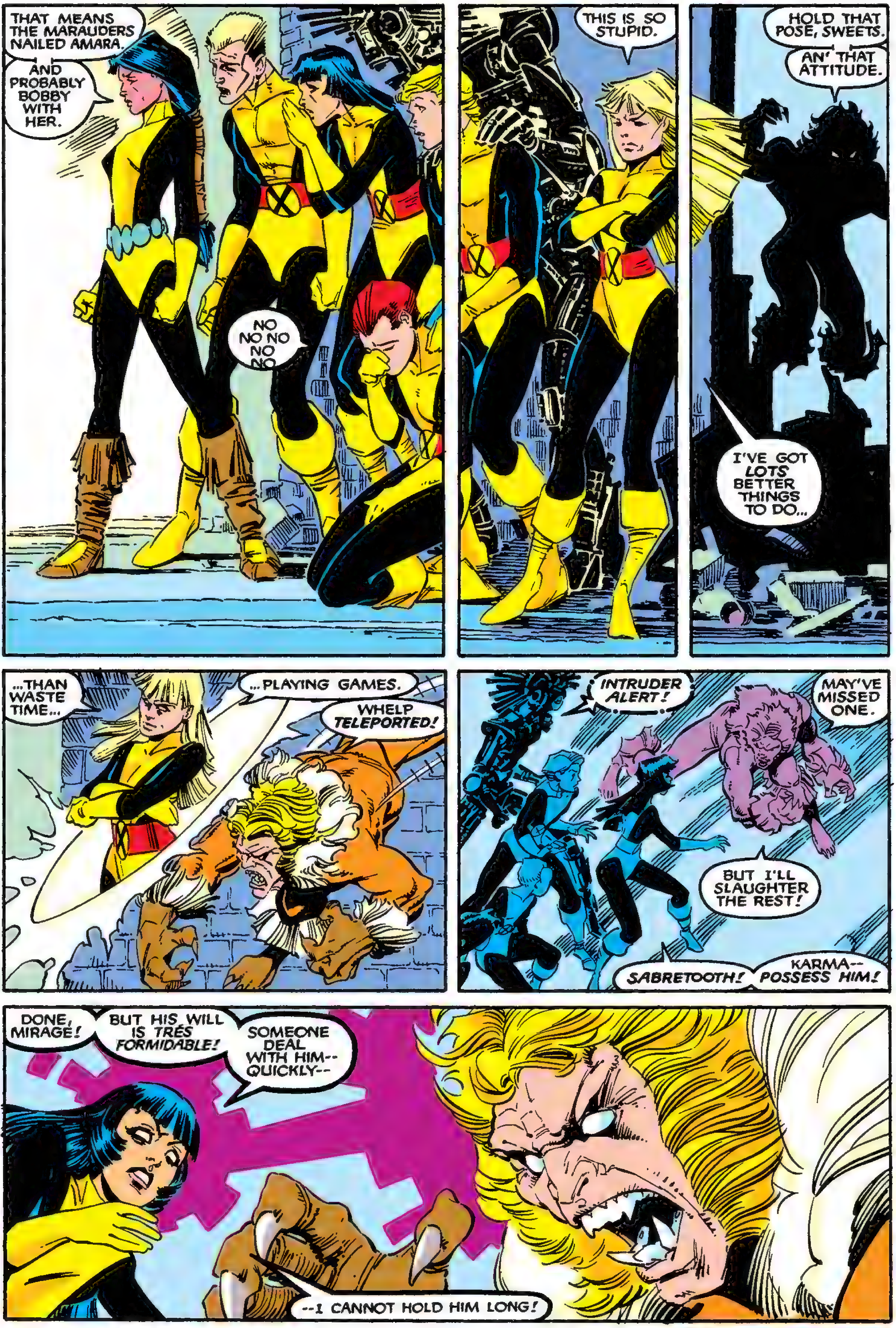
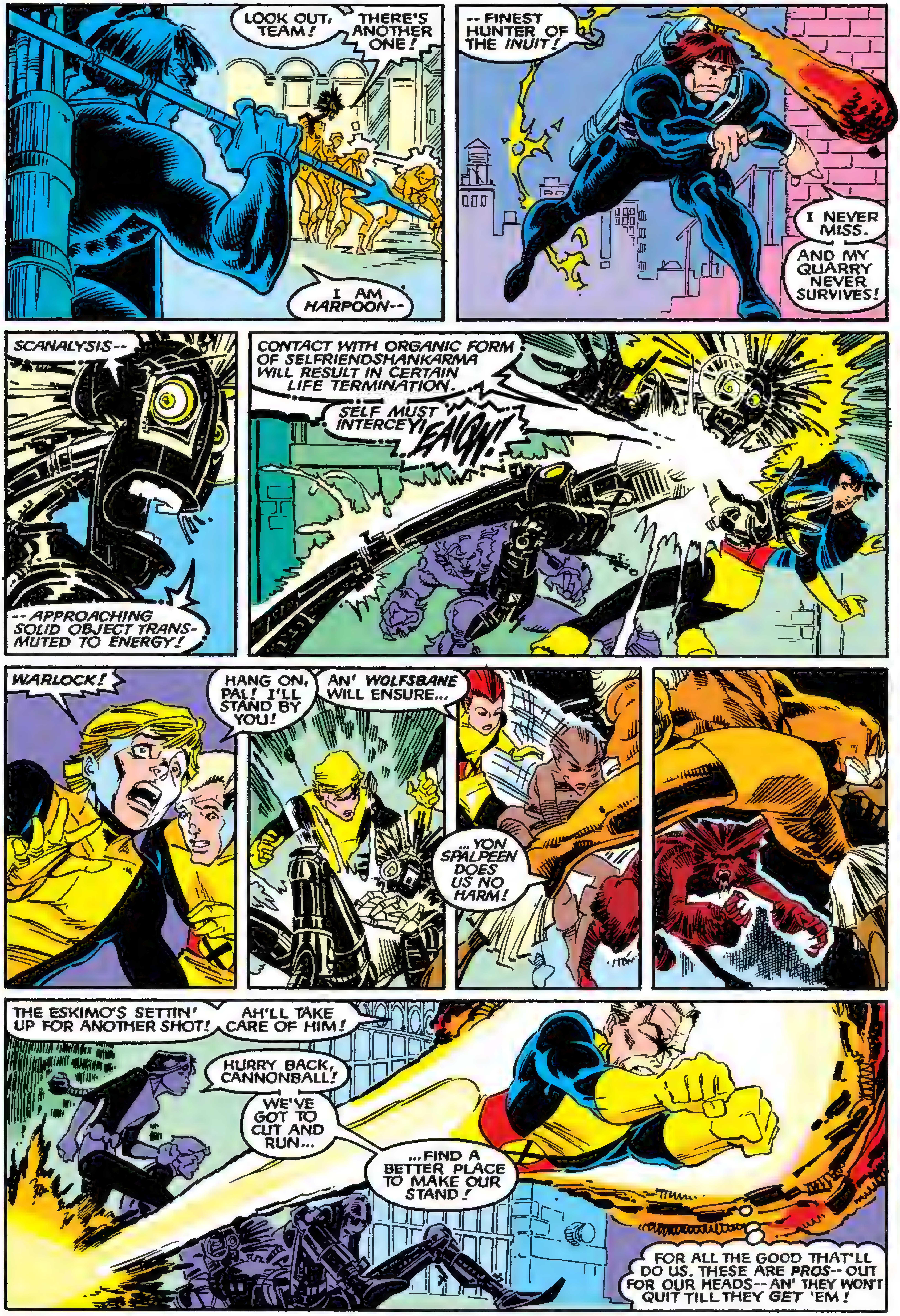
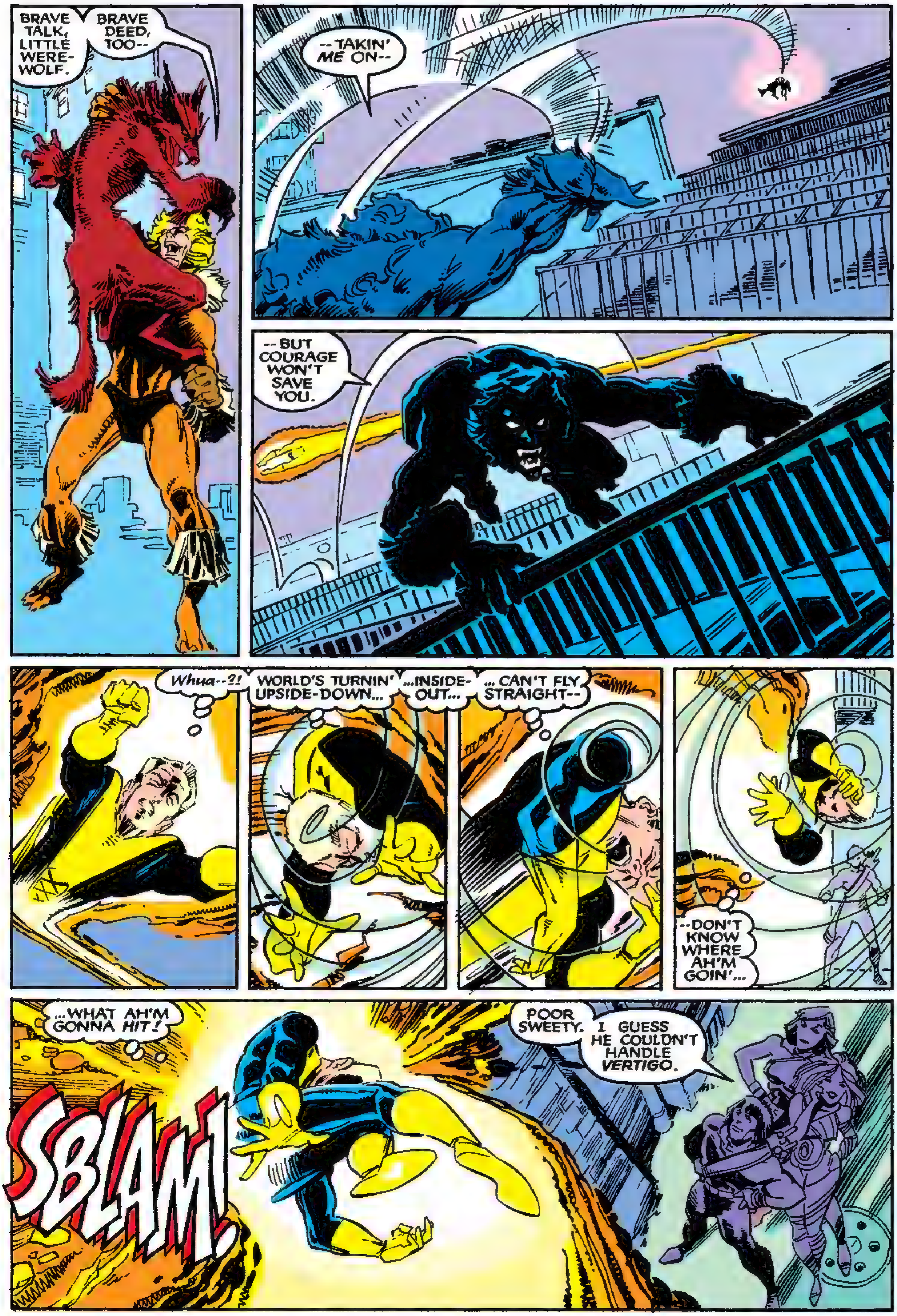

WNTOWN
DON'T "MOTHER-HEN" ME, MAGMA. I KNOW MY LIMITS.
I'VE PLENTY OF "JUICE" LEFT.
LOOK! WE'RE IN LUCK!
HERE COMES A TRAIN!
I WONDER HOW OUR TEAMMATES ARE FARING?
MIRAGE IS BOSS. SHE SAID SPLIT UP.
FORCE THE BAD GUYS TO DO THE SAME.
MAKE THE ODDS MORE EVEN, GIVE US ALL A BETTER CHANCE.
NICE IDEA, BOY.
TOO BAD WE'RE WAY AHEAD OF HER.
SOMEONE'S THERE!
NAME'S *SCALP-HUNTER*.
I'M A *MARAUDER!*
WE *KILL* MUTIES!
BOOM
ROBERTO!?!
HE'S *DEAD!!*
YEP. AN' YOU'RE NEXT.

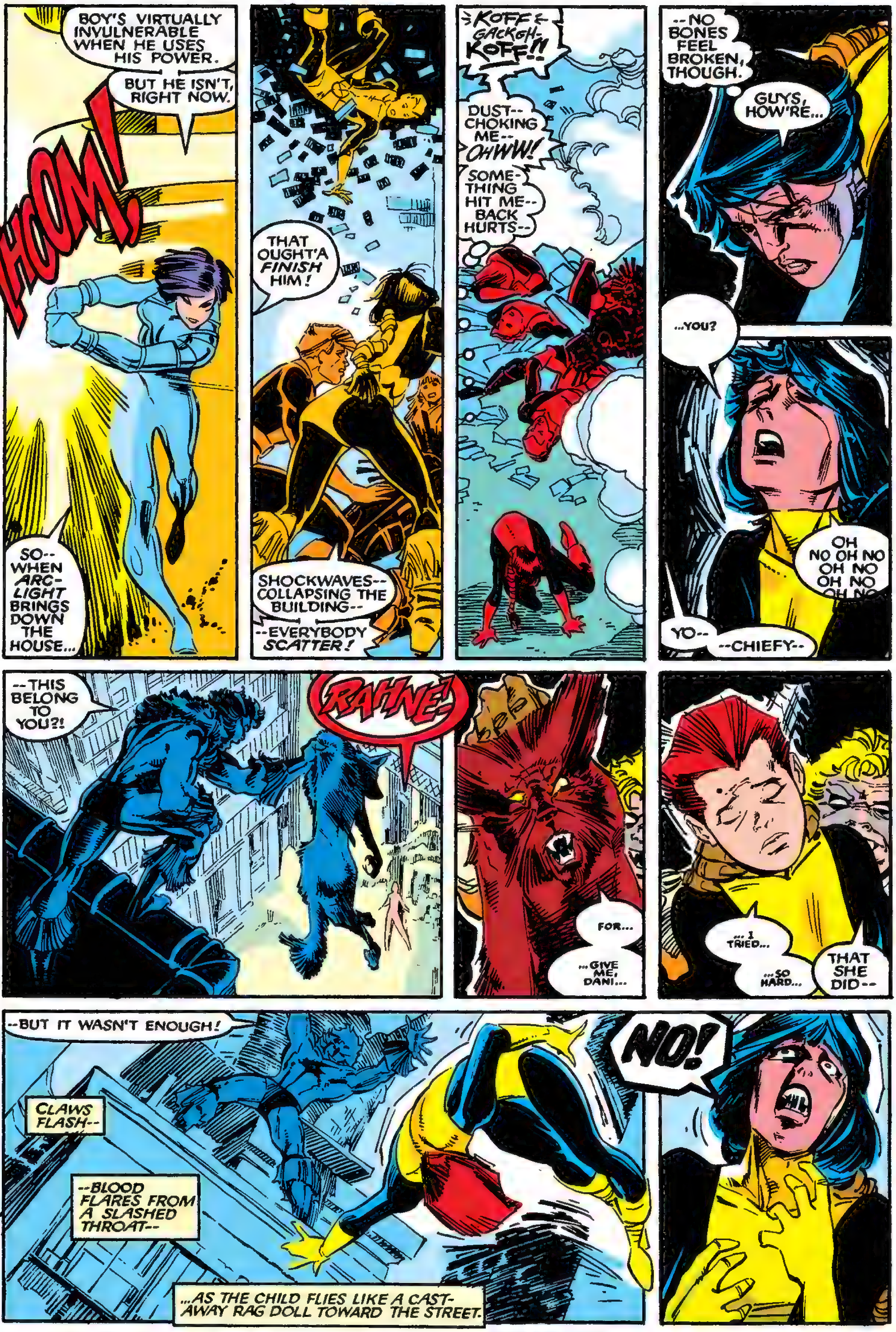

IF IT IS *AMARA AQUILLA'S* FATE TO DESCEND TO THE PITS OF TARTARUS...
...I WILL AT LEAST HAVE YOUR SHADE, MURDERER...
...TO LEAD MY WAY!
A QUICK ESCAPE, FROM MY *LAVA BLAST!*
BUT SPEED WILL NOT SAVE YOU...
...NOR WILL YOUR WEAPONS...
...AS YOUR PROJECTILES MELT AGAINST MY WHITE-HOT FLESH!
I CAN ALSO CREATE *VOLCANOS,* SCALPHUNTER-- RIGHT BENEATH YOUR FEET!
NASTY, *NASTY!*
HOW YOU GONNA DO THAT, SWEETS...
...WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN STAND ON YOUR OWN?
MUCH OBLIGED, *VERTIGO.*
NOW, WHILE THE BRAT'S DISORIENTED--
--UNABLE TO KICK IN HER POWER--
--I'LL DROP HER!
BLAM
AIEIE!
NO FAIR HOGGING ALL THE FUN, SCALPHUNTER.
LET *SCRAMBLER* DO HIS PART!

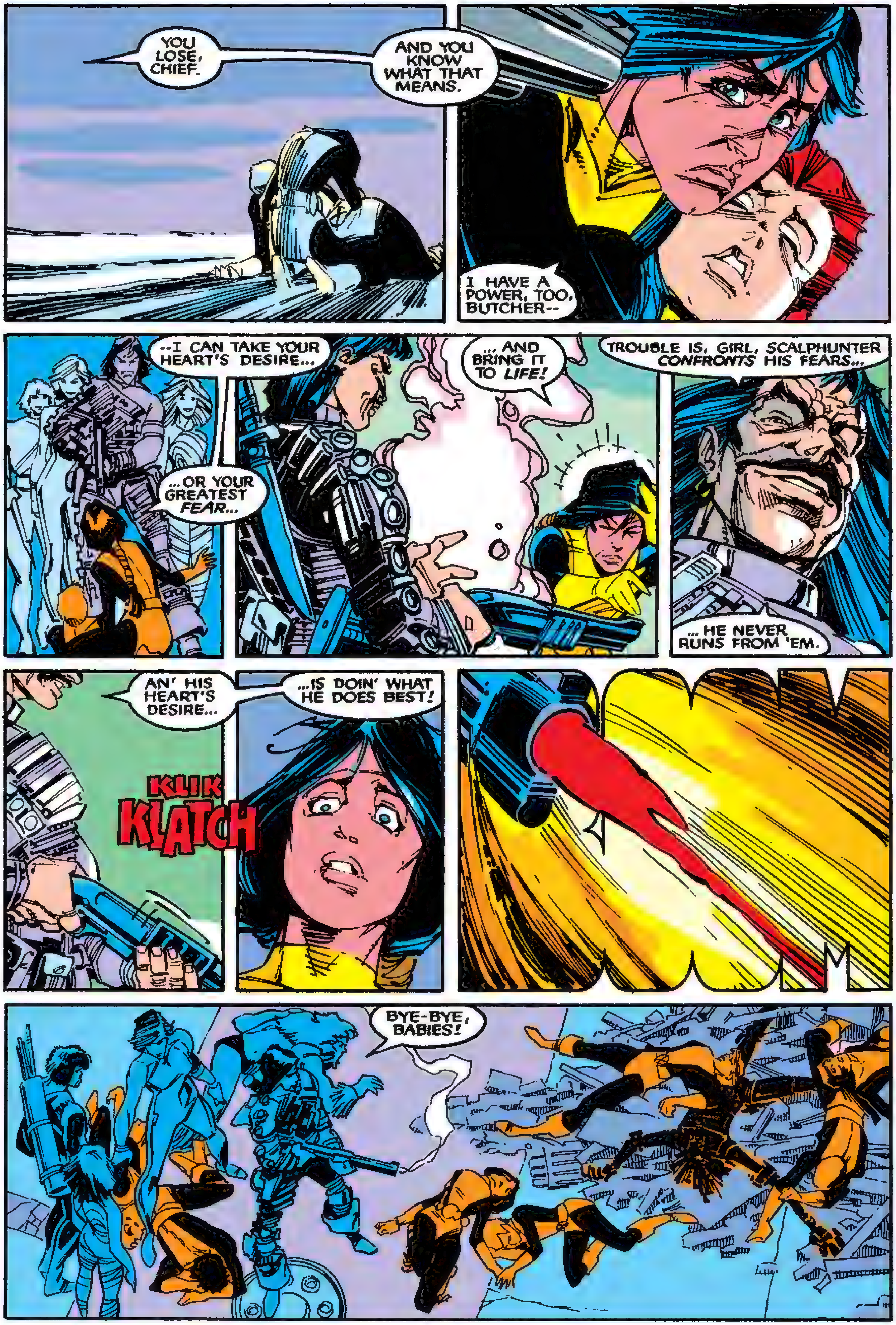

FOOLS, YOU SHOULD HAVE *SLAIN* ME WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE!
BUT WE DID.
YOU JUST DON'T KNOW IT YET.
I'LL BURN YOU ALL!
NO, KID, YOU WON'T.
SCRAMBLER DOES JUST WHAT HIS NAME IMPLIES--
-- HE *SCRAMBLES* POWERS.
IN YOUR CASE, MY LOVELY, YOUR FIRES-- INSTEAD OF CONSUMING OTHERS--
--CONSUME *YOURSELF!*
YAIEAHRRRGH!
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!
BY THE HOLY ROOD, THAT *SCREAM*--!
EXPLOSION-- LIKE A VOLCANIC ERUPTION--!
MON DIEU-- CAN IT BE--?!
ALARM ALARM ALARM--
--SELFSENSORS INDICATE SUDDEN VIOLENT ENERGY MANIFESTATION...
...CONSISTENT WITH UN-CONTROLLED, TERMINAL RELEASE OF SELFRIEND MAGMA'S POWER!

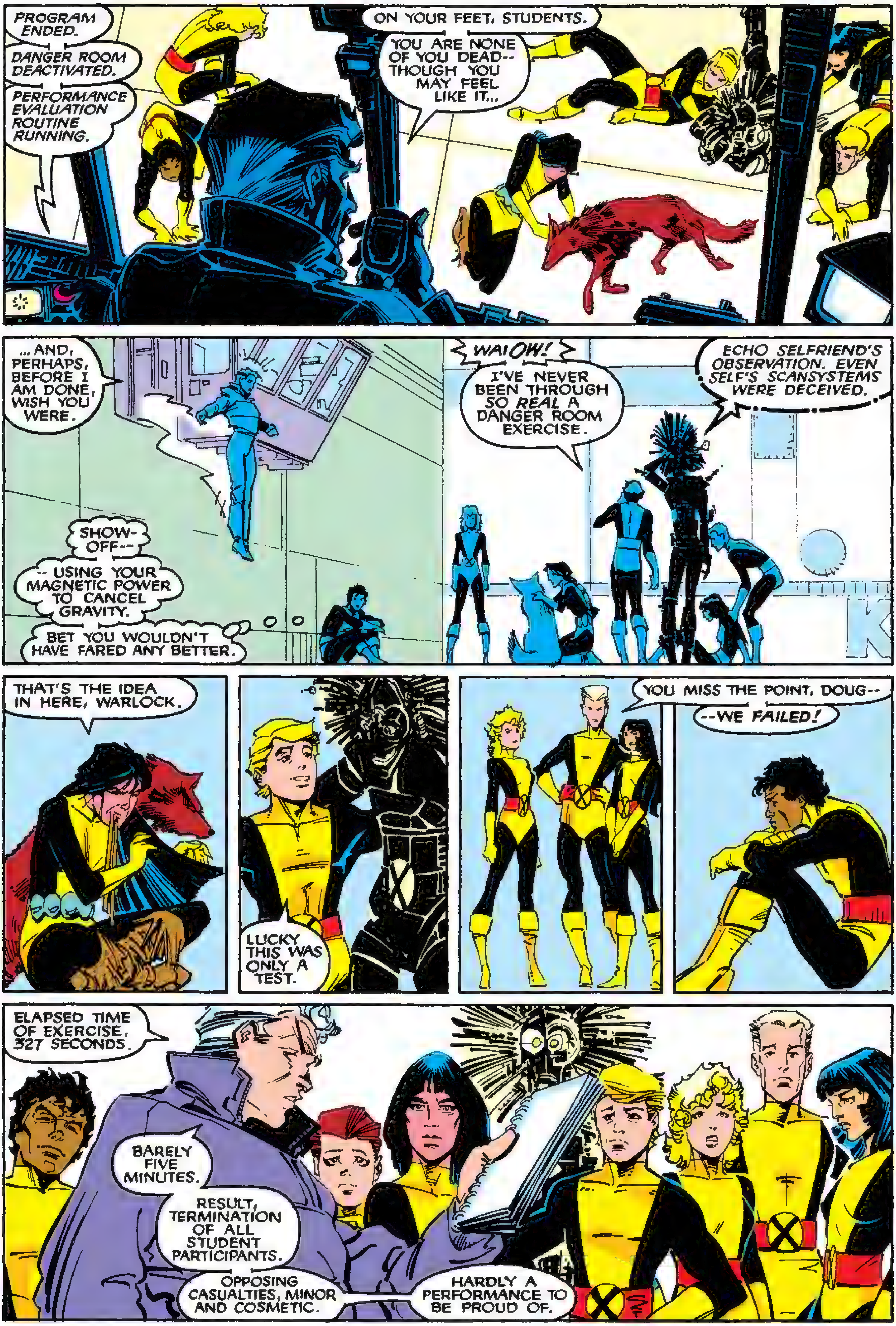

THAT MEANS THE MARAUDERS NAILED AMARA.
AND PROBABLY BOBBY WITH HER.
NO NO NO NO NO
THIS IS SO STUPID.
HOLD THAT POSE, SWEETS.
AN' THAT ATTITUDE.
I'VE GOT *LOTS* BETTER THINGS TO DO...
...THAN WASTE TIME...
...PLAYING GAMES.
WHELP *TELEPORTED!*
INTRUDER ALERT!
MAY'VE MISSED ONE.
BUT I'LL SLAUGHTER THE REST!
SABRETOOTH!
KARMA-- *POSSESS HIM!*
DONE, MIRAGE!
BUT HIS WILL IS *TRÉS FORMIDABLE!*
SOMEONE DEAL WITH HIM-- QUICKLY--
--I CANNOT HOLD HIM LONG!

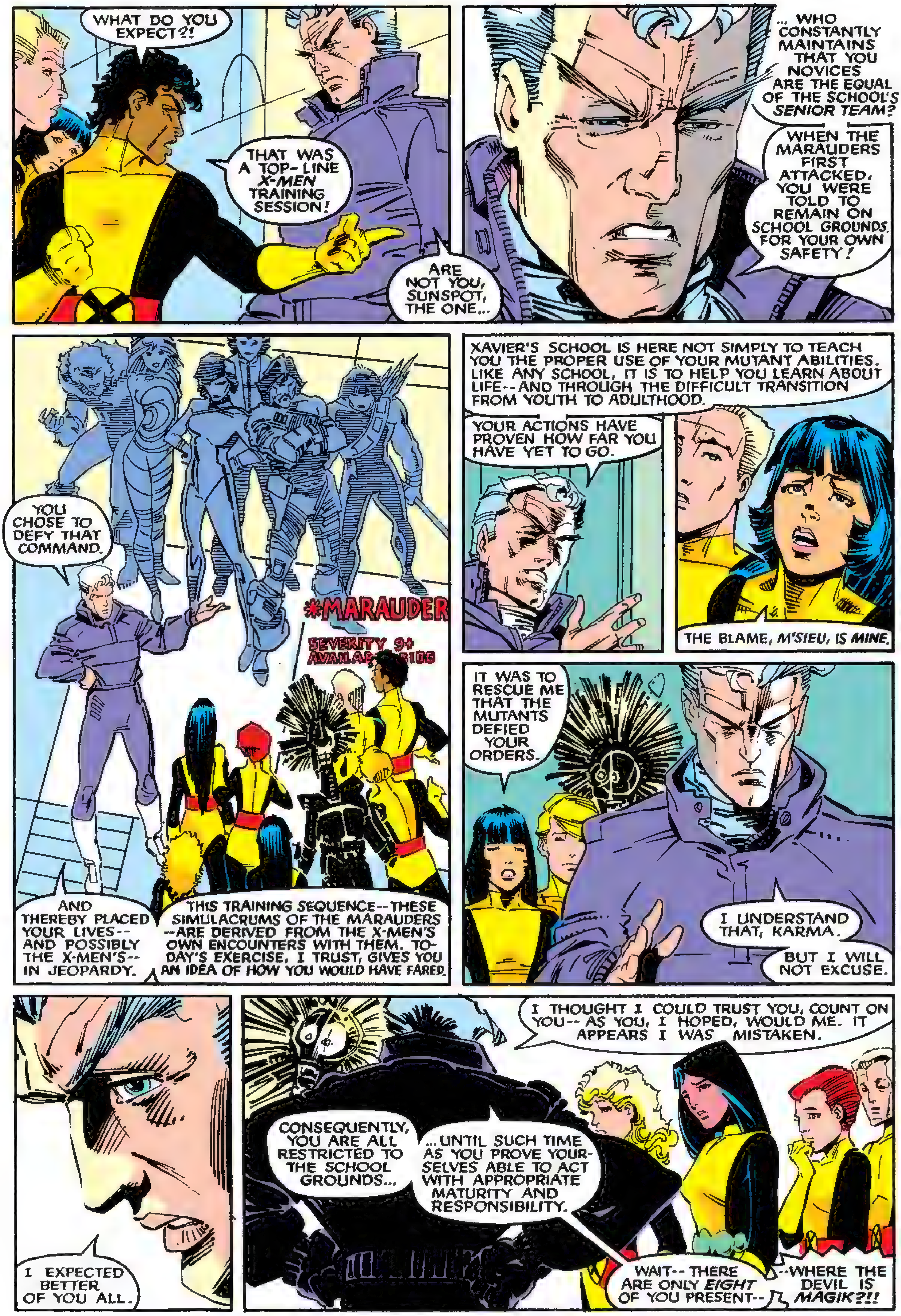

LOOK OUT, TEAM!
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!
I AM HARPOON--
--FINEST HUNTER OF THE INUIT!
I NEVER MISS.
AND MY QUARRY NEVER SURVIVES!
SCANALYSIS--
--APPROACHING SOLID OBJECT TRANSMUTED TO ENERGY!
CONTACT WITH ORGANIC FORM OF SELFRIENDSHANKARMA WILL RESULT IN CERTAIN LIFE TERMINATION.
SELF MUST INTERCEYI
EAAGH!
WARLOCK!
HANG ON, PAL! I'LL STAND BY YOU!
AN' WOLFSBANE WILL ENSURE...
...YON SPALPEEN DOES US NO HARM!
THE ESKIMO'S SETTIN' UP FOR ANOTHER SHOT!
AH'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!
HURRY BACK, CANNONBALL!
WE'VE GOT TO CUT AND RUN...
...FIND A BETTER PLACE TO MAKE OUR STAND!
FOR ALL THE GOOD THAT'LL DO US. THESE ARE PROS--OUT FOR OUR HEADS--AN' THEY WON'T QUIT TILL THEY GET 'EM!

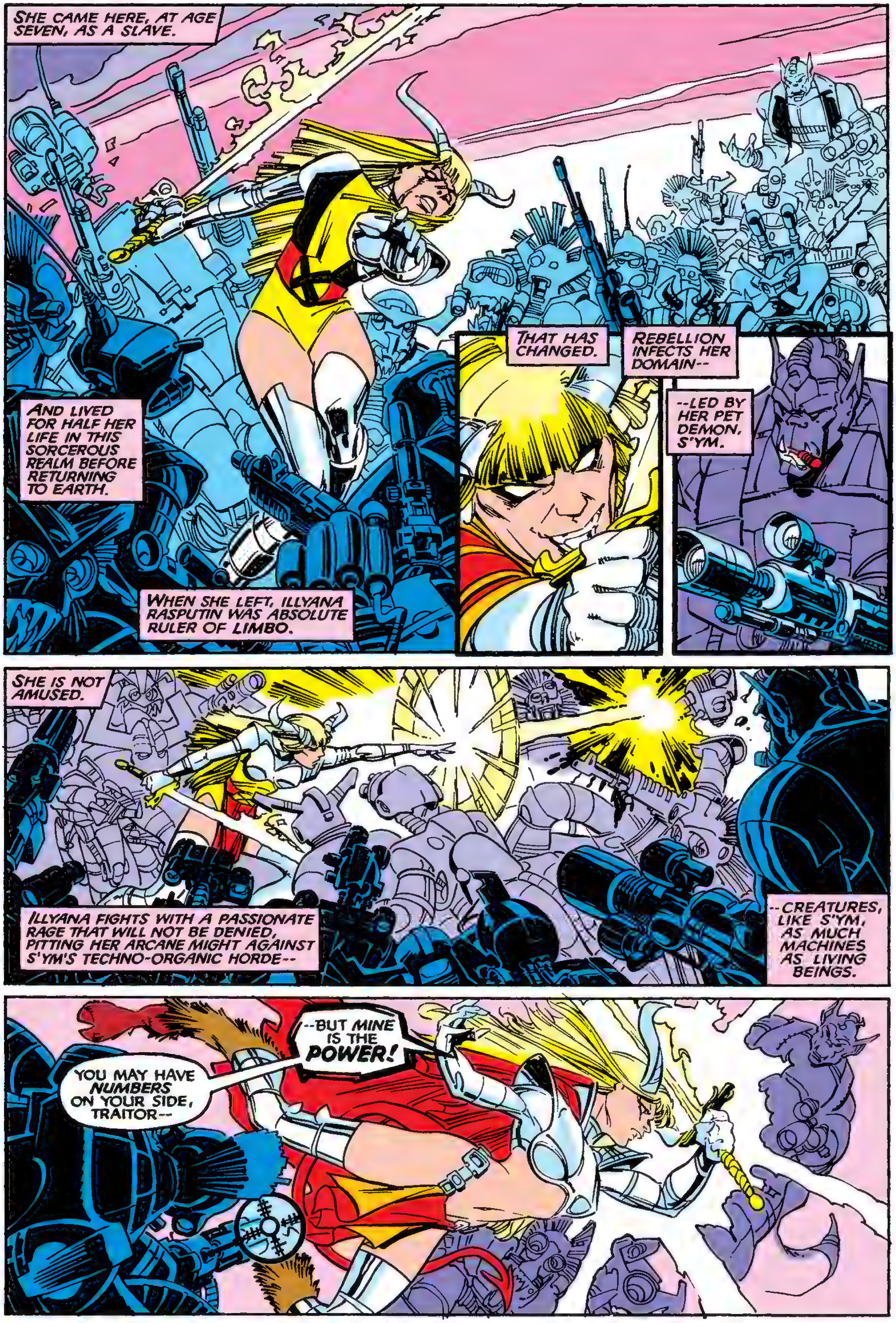

BRAVE TALK, LITTLE WEREWOLF.
BRAVE DEED, TOO--
--TAKIN' *ME* ON--
--BUT COURAGE WON'T SAVE YOU.
Whua--?!
WORLD'S TURNIN' UPSIDE-DOWN...
...INSIDE-OUT...
...CAN'T FLY STRAIGHT--
--DON'T KNOW WHERE AH'M GOIN'...
...WHAT AH'M GONNA *HIT!*
SBLAM!
POOR SWEETY.
I GUESS HE COULDN'T HANDLE *VERTIGO*.

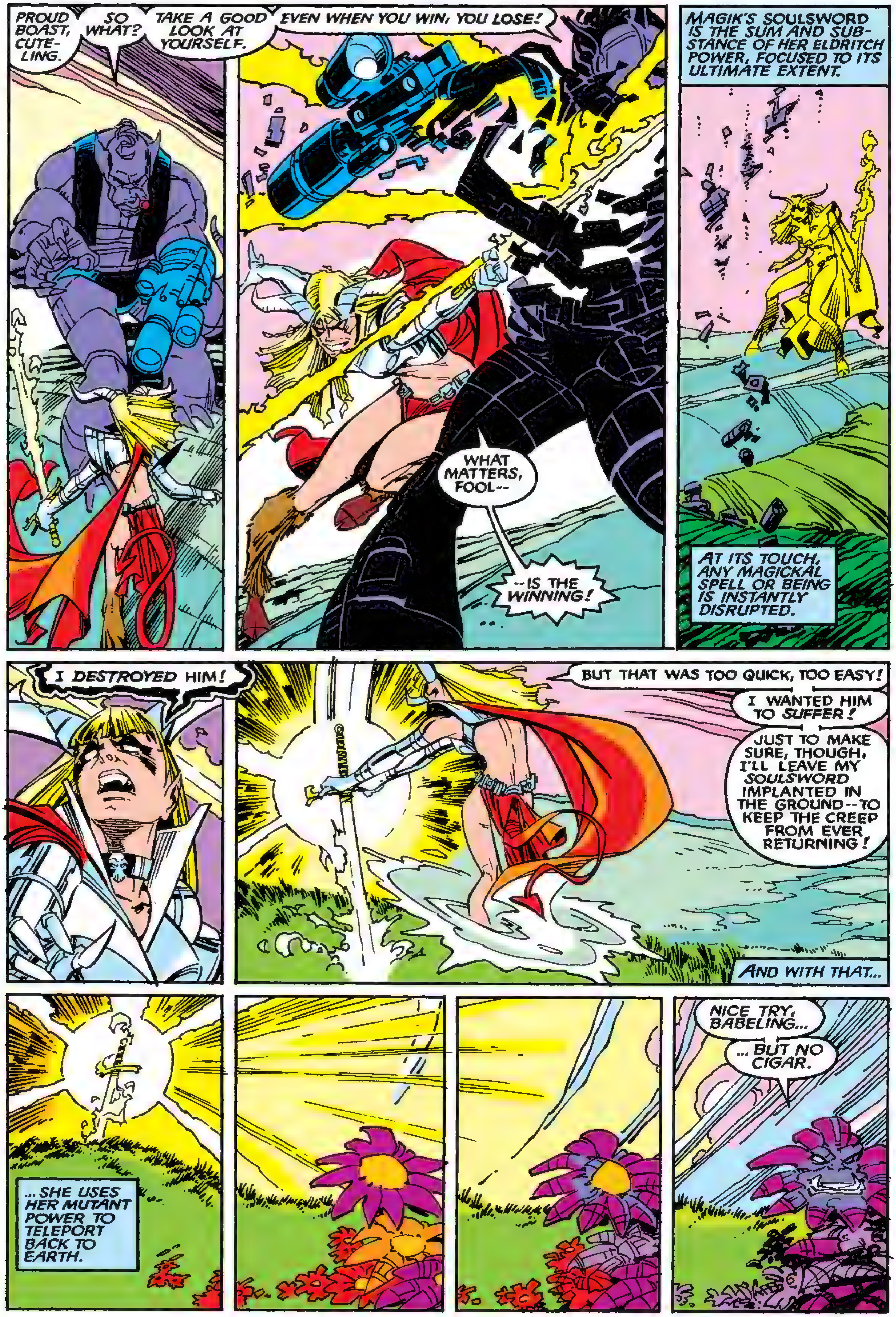

BOY'S VIRTUALLY INVULNERABLE WHEN HE USES HIS POWER.
BUT HE ISN'T, RIGHT NOW.
THOOM!
SO-- WHEN ARC-LIGHT BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE...
THAT OUGHT'A FINISH HIM!
SHOCKWAVES-- COLLAPSING THE BUILDING--
--EVERYBODY SCATTER!
KOFF GACKGH KOFF!!
DUST-- CHOKING ME-- OHWW!
SOMETHING HIT ME-- BACK HURTS--
--NO BONES FEEL BROKEN, THOUGH.
GUYS, HOW'RE...
...YOU?
OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO
YO--
--CHIEFY--
--THIS BELONG TO YOU?!
RAHNE!
FOR...
...GIVE ME, DANI...
...I TRIED...
...SO HARD...
THAT SHE DID--
--BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH!
CLAWS FLASH--
--BLOOD FLARES FROM A SLASHED THROAT--
...AS THE CHILD FLIES LIKE A CASTAWAY RAG DOLL TOWARD THE STREET.
NO!

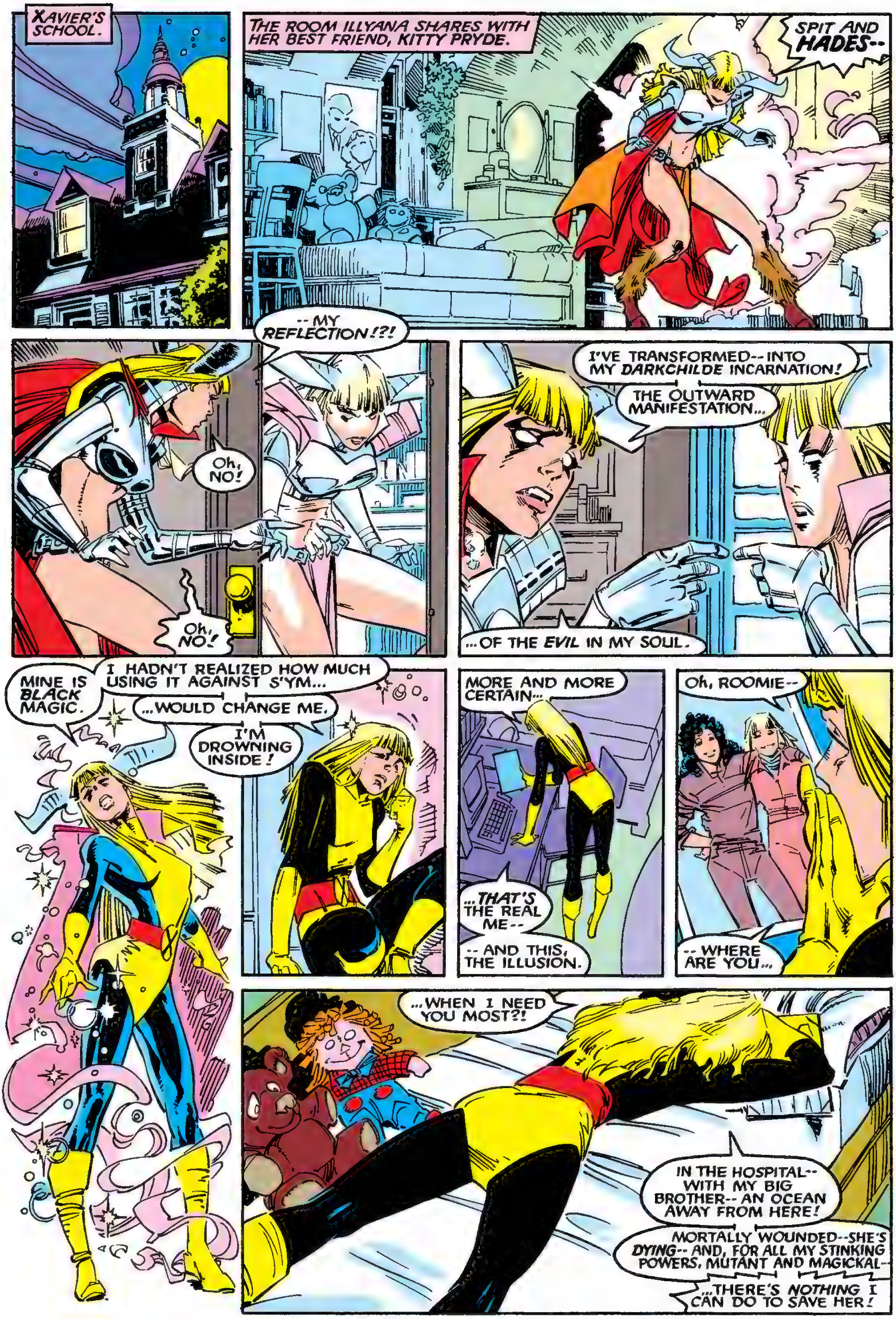

YOU LOSE, CHIEF.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
I HAVE A POWER, TOO, BUTCHER--
--I CAN TAKE YOUR HEART'S DESIRE...
...OR YOUR GREATEST *FEAR*...
... AND BRING IT TO *LIFE!*
TROUBLE IS, GIRL, SCALPHUNTER *CONFRONTS* HIS FEARS...
...HE NEVER RUNS FROM 'EM.
AN' HIS HEART'S DESIRE...
...IS DOIN' WHAT HE DOES BEST!
KLIK KLATCH
BOOM
BYE-BYE, BABIES!

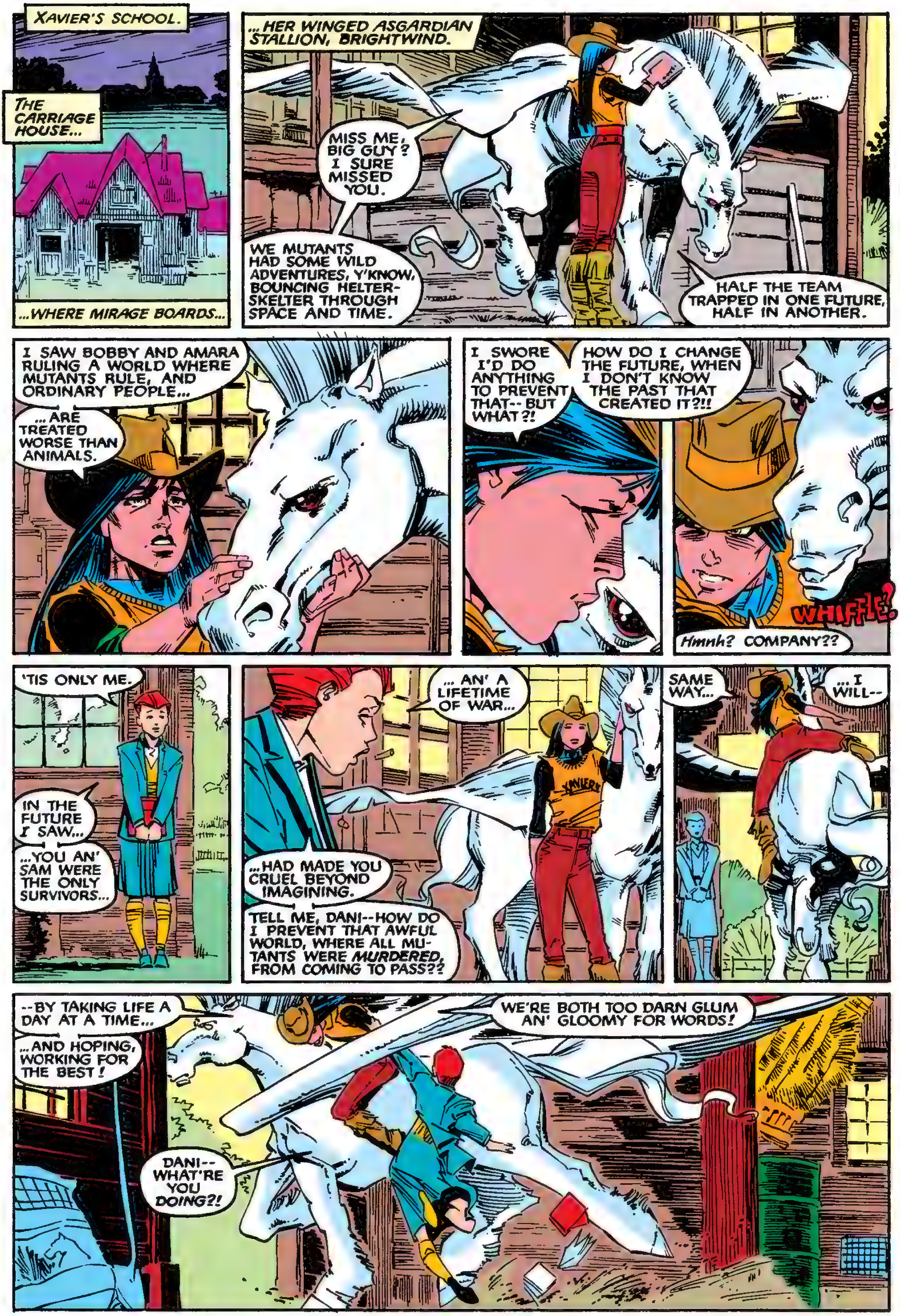

PROGRAM ENDED.
DANGER ROOM DEACTIVATED.
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION ROUTINE RUNNING.
ON YOUR FEET, STUDENTS.
YOU ARE NONE OF YOU DEAD-- THOUGH YOU MAY FEEL LIKE IT...
...AND, PERHAPS, BEFORE I AM DONE, WISH YOU WERE.
SHOW-OFF--
-- USING YOUR MAGNETIC POWER TO CANCEL GRAVITY.
BET YOU WOULDN'T HAVE FARED ANY BETTER.
WAIOW!
I'VE NEVER BEEN THROUGH SO REAL A DANGER ROOM EXERCISE.
ECHO SELFRIEND'S OBSERVATION. EVEN SELF'S SCANSYSTEMS WERE DECEIVED.
THAT'S THE IDEA IN HERE, WARLOCK.
LUCKY THIS WAS ONLY A TEST.
YOU MISS THE POINT, DOUG--
--WE FAILED!
ELAPSED TIME OF EXERCISE, 327 SECONDS.
BARELY FIVE MINUTES.
RESULT, TERMINATION OF ALL STUDENT PARTICIPANTS.
OPPOSING CASUALTIES, MINOR AND COSMETIC.
HARDLY A PERFORMANCE TO BE PROUD OF.

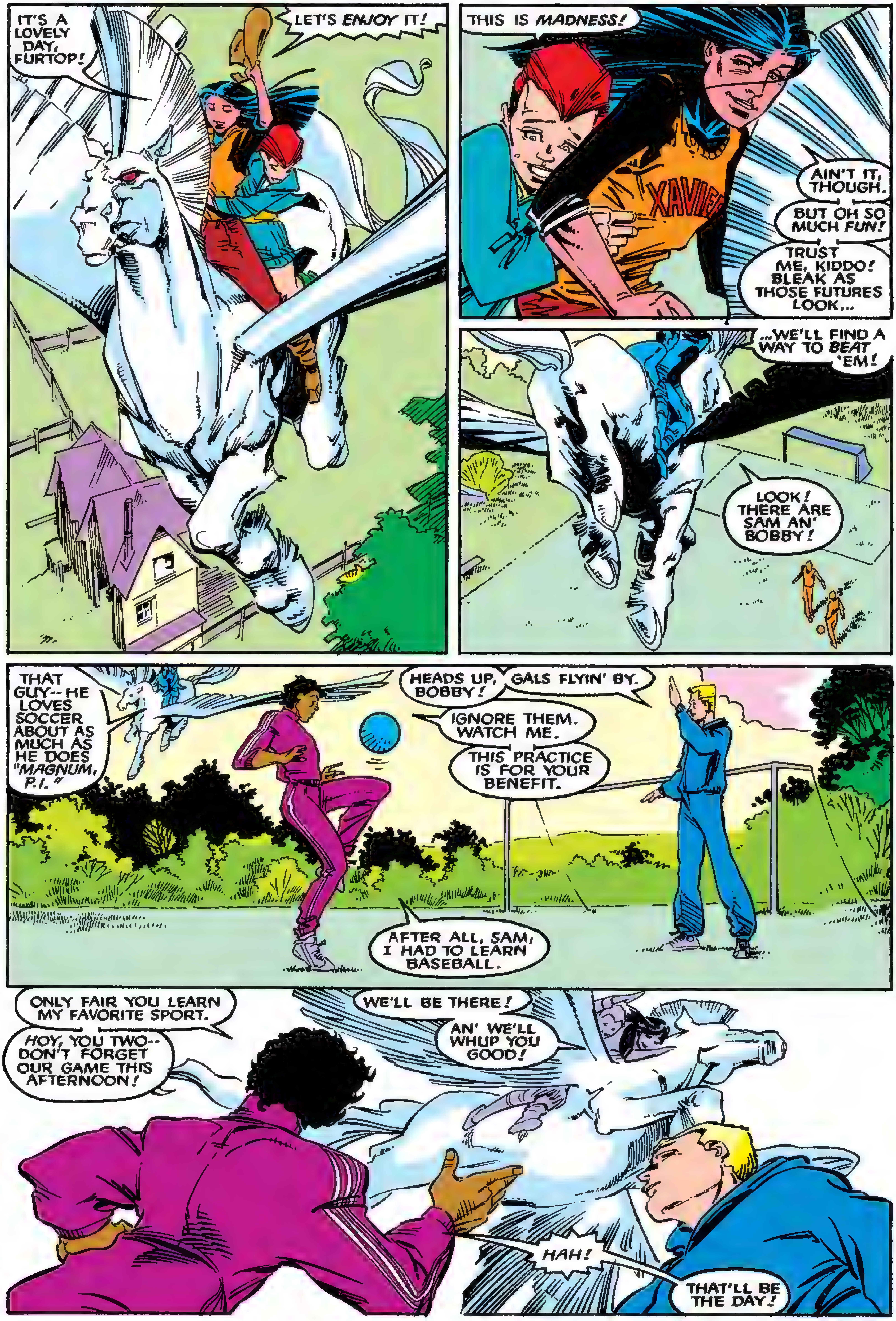

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?!
THAT WAS A TOP-LINE *X-MEN* TRAINING SESSION!
ARE NOT YOU, SUNSPOT, THE ONE...
... WHO CONSTANTLY MAINTAINS THAT YOU NOVICES ARE THE EQUAL OF THE SCHOOL'S *SENIOR TEAM?*
WHEN THE MARAUDERS FIRST ATTACKED, YOU WERE TOLD TO REMAIN ON SCHOOL GROUNDS, FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY!
YOU CHOSE TO DEFY THAT COMMAND.
*MARAUDER
SEVERITY 9+
AND THEREBY PLACED YOUR LIVES-- AND POSSIBLY THE X-MEN'S-- IN JEOPARDY.
THIS TRAINING SEQUENCE--THESE SIMULACRUMS OF THE MARAUDERS --ARE DERIVED FROM THE X-MEN'S OWN ENCOUNTERS WITH THEM. TODAY'S EXERCISE, I TRUST, GIVES YOU AN IDEA OF HOW YOU WOULD HAVE FARED.
XAVIER'S SCHOOL IS HERE NOT SIMPLY TO TEACH YOU THE PROPER USE OF YOUR MUTANT ABILITIES. LIKE ANY SCHOOL, IT IS TO HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT LIFE--AND THROUGH THE DIFFICULT TRANSITION FROM YOUTH TO ADULTHOOD.
YOUR ACTIONS HAVE PROVEN HOW FAR YOU HAVE YET TO GO.
THE BLAME, *M'SIEU,* IS *MINE.*
IT WAS TO RESCUE ME THAT THE MUTANTS DEFIED YOUR ORDERS.
I UNDERSTAND THAT, KARMA.
BUT I WILL NOT EXCUSE.
I EXPECTED BETTER OF YOU ALL.
I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST YOU, COUNT ON YOU-- AS YOU, I HOPED, WOULD ME. IT APPEARS I WAS MISTAKEN.
CONSEQUENTLY, YOU ARE ALL RESTRICTED TO THE SCHOOL GROUNDS...
...UNTIL SUCH TIME AS YOU PROVE YOURSELVES ABLE TO ACT WITH APPROPRIATE MATURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.
WAIT-- THERE ARE ONLY *EIGHT* OF YOU PRESENT--
--WHERE THE DEVIL IS *MAGIK?!!*

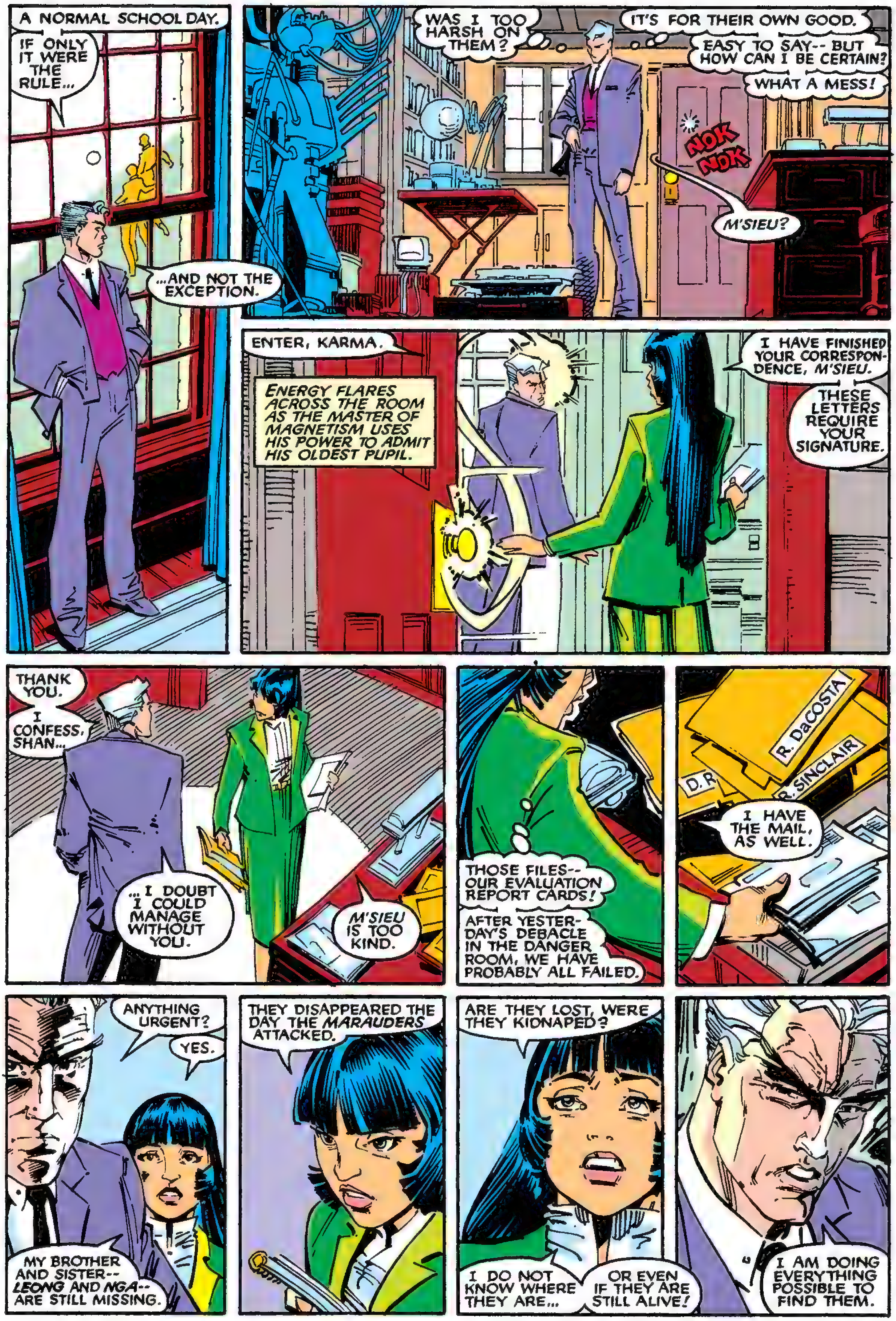

SHE CAME HERE, AT AGE SEVEN, AS A SLAVE.
AND LIVED FOR HALF HER LIFE IN THIS SORCEROUS REALM BEFORE RETURNING TO EARTH.
WHEN SHE LEFT, ILLYANA RASPUTIN WAS ABSOLUTE RULER OF LIMBO.
THAT HAS CHANGED.
REBELLION INFECTS HER DOMAIN--
--LED BY HER PET DEMON, S'YM.
SHE IS NOT AMUSED.
ILLYANA FIGHTS WITH A PASSIONATE RAGE THAT WILL NOT BE DENIED, PITTING HER ARCANE MIGHT AGAINST S'YM'S TECHNO-ORGANIC HORDE--
--CREATURES, LIKE S'YM, AS MUCH MACHINES AS LIVING BEINGS.
YOU MAY HAVE NUMBERS ON YOUR SIDE, TRAITOR--
--BUT MINE IS THE POWER!

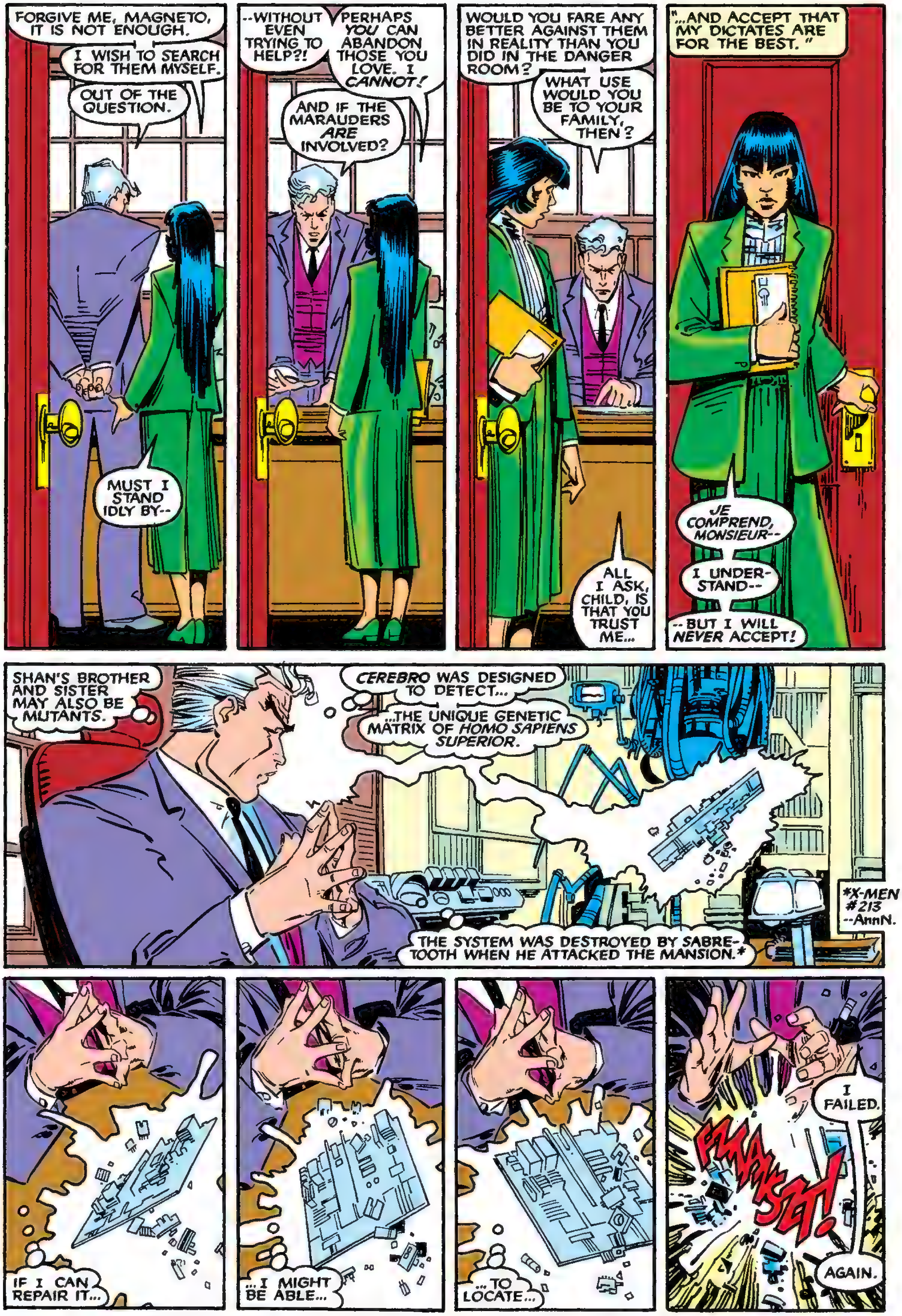

PROUD BOAST, CUTELING.
SO WHAT?
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOURSELF.
EVEN WHEN YOU WIN, YOU LOSE!
WHAT MATTERS, FOOL--
--IS THE WINNING!
MAGIK'S SOULSWORD IS THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF HER ELDRITCH POWER, FOCUSED TO ITS ULTIMATE EXTENT.
AT ITS TOUCH, ANY MAGICKAL SPELL OR BEING IS INSTANTLY DISRUPTED.
I DESTROYED HIM!
BUT THAT WAS TOO QUICK, TOO EASY!
I WANTED HIM TO SUFFER!
JUST TO MAKE SURE, THOUGH, I'LL LEAVE MY SOULSWORD IMPLANTED IN THE GROUND--TO KEEP THE CREEP FROM EVER RETURNING!
AND WITH THAT...
...SHE USES HER MUTANT POWER TO TELEPORT BACK TO EARTH.
NICE TRY, BABELING...
...BUT NO CIGAR.

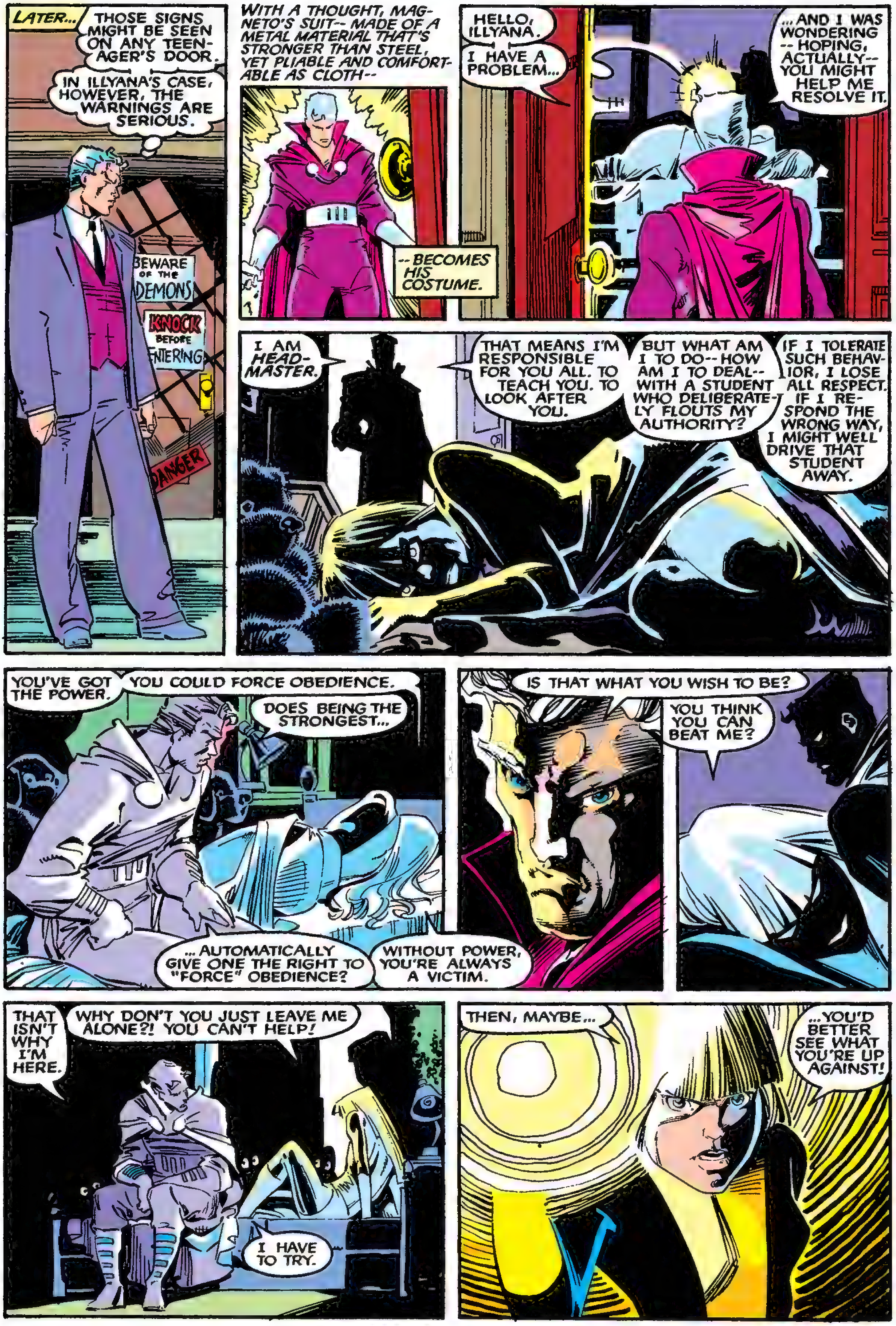

XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
THE ROOM ILLYANA SHARES WITH HER BEST FRIEND, KITTY PRYDE.
SPIT AND HADES--
-- MY REFLECTION!?!
Oh, NO!
Oh, NO!
I'VE TRANSFORMED-- INTO MY DARKCHILDE INCARNATION!
THE OUTWARD MANIFESTATION...
...OF THE EVIL IN MY SOUL.
MINE IS BLACK MAGIC.
I HADN'T REALIZED HOW MUCH USING IT AGAINST S'YM...
...WOULD CHANGE ME.
I'M DROWNING INSIDE!
MORE AND MORE CERTAIN...
...THAT'S THE REAL ME--
-- AND THIS, THE ILLUSION.
Oh, ROOMIE--
-- WHERE ARE YOU...
...WHEN I NEED YOU MOST?!
IN THE HOSPITAL-- WITH MY BIG BROTHER-- AN OCEAN AWAY FROM HERE!
MORTALLY WOUNDED--SHE'S DYING-- AND, FOR ALL MY STINKING POWERS, MUTANT AND MAGICKAL--
...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO SAVE HER!

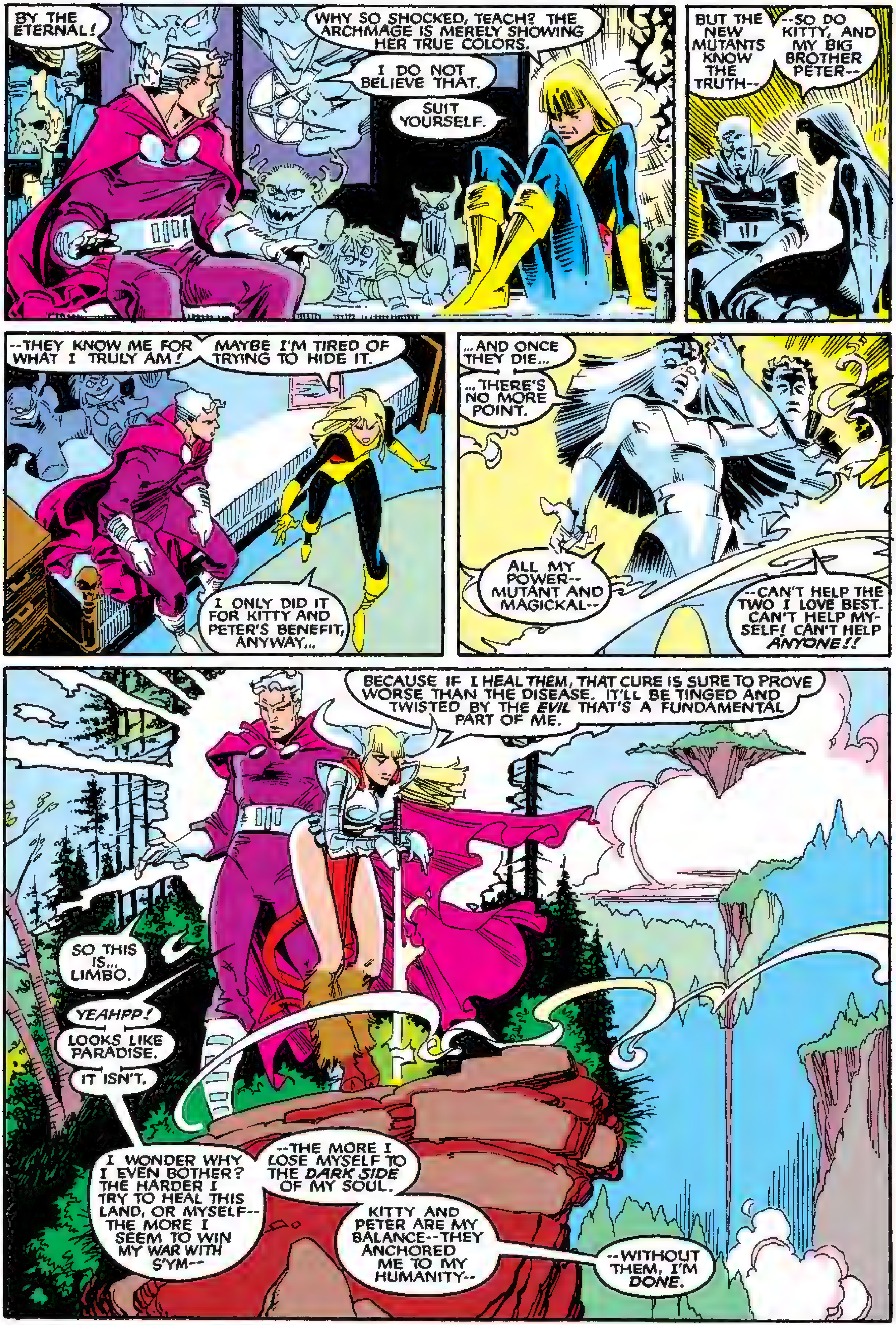

XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
THE CARRIAGE HOUSE...
...WHERE MIRAGE BOARDS...
...HER WINGED ASGARDIAN STALLION, BRIGHTWIND.
MISS ME, BIG GUY? I SURE MISSED YOU.
WE MUTANTS HAD SOME WILD ADVENTURES, Y'KNOW, BOUNCING HELTER-SKELTER THROUGH SPACE AND TIME.
HALF THE TEAM TRAPPED IN ONE FUTURE, HALF IN ANOTHER.
I SAW BOBBY AND AMARA RULING A WORLD WHERE MUTANTS RULE, AND ORDINARY PEOPLE...
...ARE TREATED WORSE THAN ANIMALS.
I SWORE I'D DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT THAT-- BUT WHAT?!
HOW DO I CHANGE THE FUTURE, WHEN I DON'T KNOW THE PAST THAT CREATED IT?!!
WHIFFLE?
Hmnh? COMPANY??
'TIS ONLY ME.
IN THE FUTURE I SAW...
...YOU AN' SAM WERE THE ONLY SURVIVORS...
... AN' A LIFETIME OF WAR...
...HAD MADE YOU CRUEL BEYOND IMAGINING.
TELL ME, DANI--HOW DO I PREVENT THAT AWFUL WORLD, WHERE ALL MUTANTS WERE MURDERED, FROM COMING TO PASS??
XAVIER'S
SAME WAY...
... I WILL--
--BY TAKING LIFE A DAY AT A TIME...
...AND HOPING, WORKING FOR THE BEST!
WE'RE BOTH TOO DARN GLUM AN' GLOOMY FOR WORDS!
DANI--WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

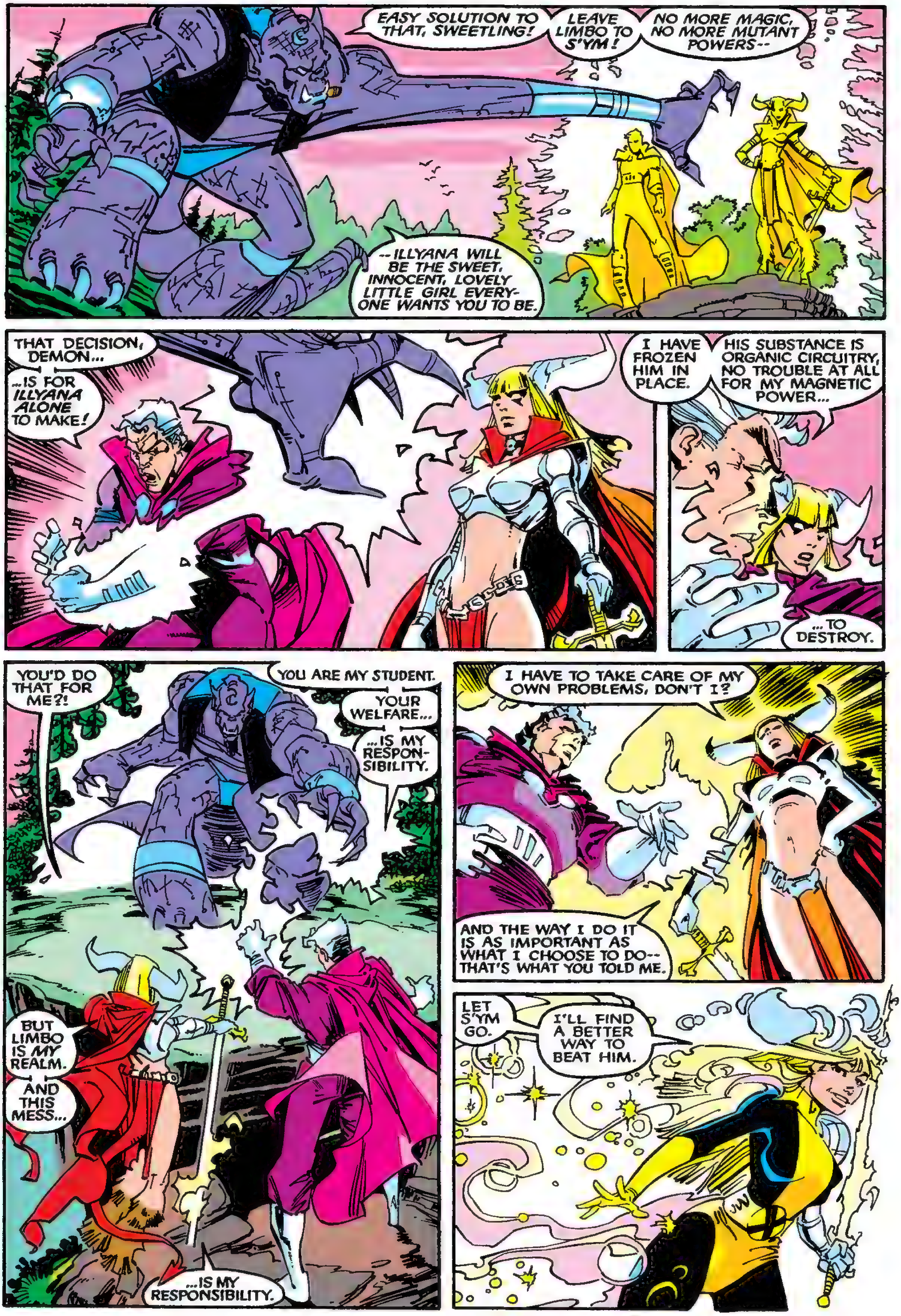

IT'S A LOVELY DAY, FURTOP!
LET'S *ENJOY* IT!
THIS IS *MADNESS!*
AIN'T IT, THOUGH.
BUT OH SO MUCH *FUN!*
TRUST ME, KIDDO! BLEAK AS THOSE FUTURES LOOK...
...WE'LL FIND A WAY TO *BEAT* 'EM!
XAVIER
LOOK! THERE ARE SAM AN' BOBBY!
THAT GUY--HE LOVES SOCCER ABOUT AS MUCH AS HE DOES *"MAGNUM, P.I."*
HEADS UP, BOBBY!
GALS FLYIN' BY.
IGNORE THEM. WATCH ME.
THIS PRACTICE IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT.
AFTER ALL, SAM, I HAD TO LEARN BASEBALL.
ONLY FAIR YOU LEARN MY FAVORITE SPORT.
HOY, YOU TWO--DON'T FORGET OUR GAME THIS AFTERNOON!
WE'LL BE THERE!
AN' WE'LL WHUP YOU GOOD!
HAH!
THAT'LL BE THE DAY!

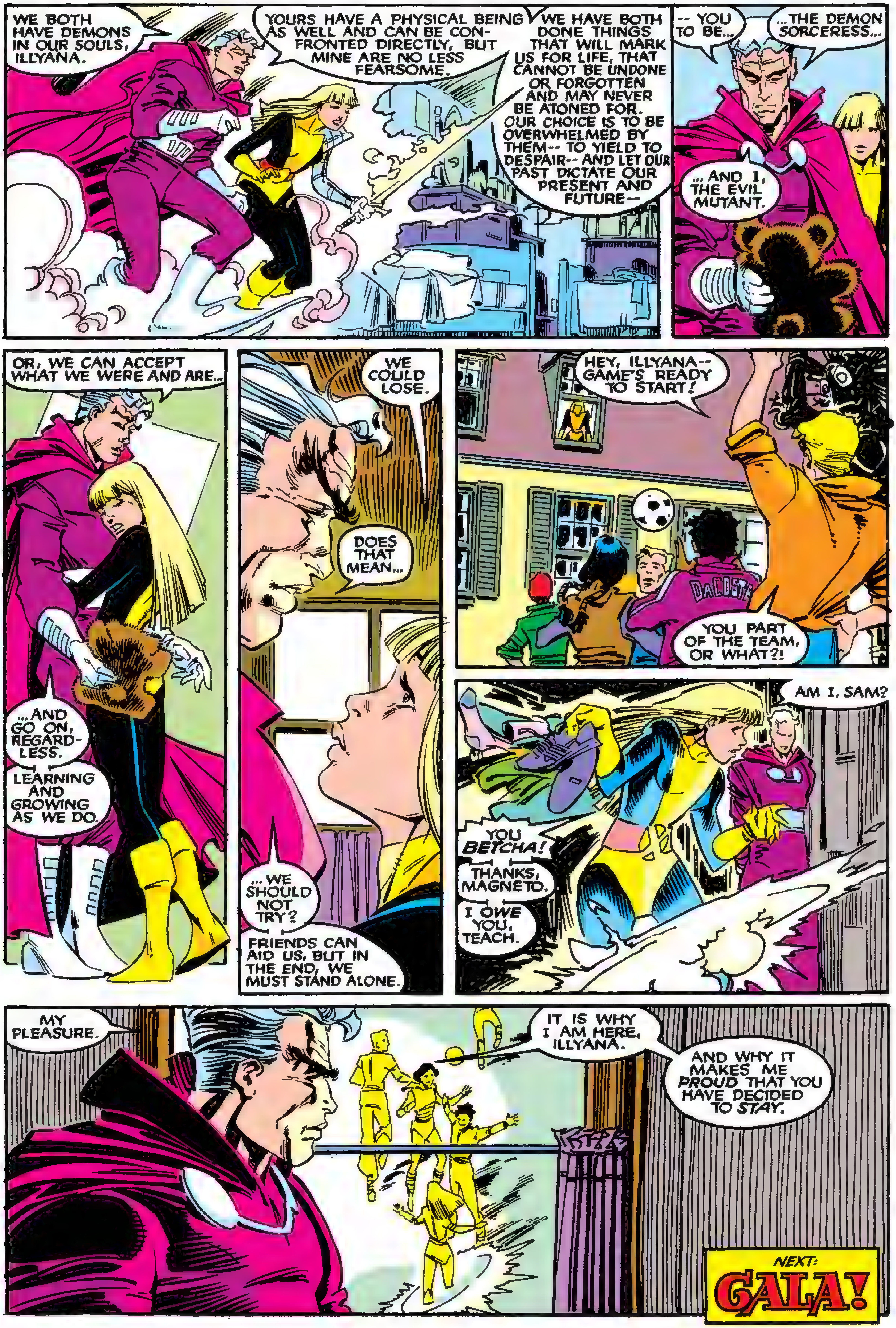

A NORMAL SCHOOL DAY.
IF ONLY IT WERE THE RULE...
...AND NOT THE EXCEPTION.
WAS I TOO HARSH ON THEM?
IT'S FOR THEIR OWN GOOD.
EASY TO SAY-- BUT HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN?
WHAT A MESS!
NOK NOK
M'SIEU?
ENTER, KARMA.
ENERGY FLARES ACROSS THE ROOM AS THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM USES HIS POWER TO ADMIT HIS OLDEST PUPIL.
I HAVE FINISHED YOUR CORRESPONDENCE, M'SIEU.
THESE LETTERS REQUIRE YOUR SIGNATURE.
THANK YOU.
I CONFESS, SHAN...
...I DOUBT I COULD MANAGE WITHOUT YOU.
M'SIEU IS TOO KIND.
THOSE FILES-- OUR EVALUATION REPORT CARDS!
AFTER YESTERDAY'S DEBACLE IN THE DANGER ROOM, WE HAVE PROBABLY ALL FAILED.
R. DaCOSTA
R. SINCLAIR
D. R
I HAVE THE MAIL, AS WELL.
ANYTHING URGENT?
YES.
MY BROTHER AND SISTER-- LEONG AND NGA-- ARE STILL MISSING.
THEY DISAPPEARED THE DAY THE MARAUDERS ATTACKED.
ARE THEY LOST, WERE THEY KIDNAPED?
I DO NOT KNOW WHERE THEY ARE...
OR EVEN IF THEY ARE STILL ALIVE!
I AM DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FIND THEM.


FORGIVE ME, MAGNETO, IT IS NOT ENOUGH.
I WISH TO SEARCH FOR THEM MYSELF.
OUT OF THE QUESTION.
MUST I STAND IDLY BY--
--WITHOUT EVEN TRYING TO HELP?!
PERHAPS *YOU* CAN ABANDON THOSE YOU LOVE. I *CANNOT!*
AND IF THE MARAUDERS *ARE* INVOLVED?
WOULD YOU FARE ANY BETTER AGAINST THEM IN REALITY THAN YOU DID IN THE DANGER ROOM?
WHAT USE WOULD YOU BE TO YOUR FAMILY, THEN?
ALL I ASK, CHILD, IS THAT YOU TRUST ME...
"...AND ACCEPT THAT MY DICTATES ARE FOR THE BEST."
JE COMPREND, MONSIEUR--
I UNDERSTAND--
--BUT I WILL *NEVER* ACCEPT!
SHAN'S BROTHER AND SISTER MAY ALSO BE MUTANTS.
CEREBRO WAS DESIGNED TO DETECT...
...THE UNIQUE GENETIC MATRIX OF *HOMO SAPIENS SUPERIOR.*
THE SYSTEM WAS DESTROYED BY SABRETOOTH WHEN HE ATTACKED THE MANSION.*
*X-MEN #213 --AnnN.
IF I CAN REPAIR IT...
...I MIGHT BE ABLE...
...TO LOCATE...
FZAAKZT!
I FAILED.
AGAIN.


LATER...
THOSE SIGNS MIGHT BE SEEN ON ANY TEEN-AGER'S DOOR.
IN ILLYANA'S CASE, HOWEVER, THE WARNINGS ARE SERIOUS.
BEWARE OF THE DEMONS
KNOCK BEFORE ENTERING
DANGER
WITH A THOUGHT, MAGNETO'S SUIT-- MADE OF A METAL MATERIAL THAT'S STRONGER THAN STEEL, YET PLIABLE AND COMFORTABLE AS CLOTH--
--BECOMES HIS COSTUME.
HELLO, ILLYANA.
I HAVE A PROBLEM...
...AND I WAS WONDERING --HOPING, ACTUALLY-- YOU MIGHT HELP ME RESOLVE IT.
I AM HEADMASTER.
THAT MEANS I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU ALL. TO TEACH YOU. TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
BUT WHAT AM I TO DO--HOW AM I TO DEAL-- WITH A STUDENT WHO DELIBERATELY FLOUTS MY AUTHORITY?
IF I TOLERATE SUCH BEHAVIOR, I LOSE ALL RESPECT. IF I RESPOND THE WRONG WAY, I MIGHT WELL DRIVE THAT STUDENT AWAY.
YOU'VE GOT THE POWER.
YOU COULD FORCE OBEDIENCE.
DOES BEING THE STRONGEST...
...AUTOMATICALLY GIVE ONE THE RIGHT TO "FORCE" OBEDIENCE?
WITHOUT POWER, YOU'RE ALWAYS A VICTIM.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WISH TO BE?
YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME?
THAT ISN'T WHY I'M HERE.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?! YOU CAN'T HELP!
I HAVE TO TRY.
THEN, MAYBE...
...YOU'D BETTER SEE WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST!


BY THE ETERNAL!
WHY SO SHOCKED, TEACH? THE ARCHMAGE IS MERELY SHOWING HER TRUE COLORS.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT.
SUIT YOURSELF.
BUT THE NEW MUTANTS KNOW THE TRUTH--
--SO DO KITTY, AND MY BIG BROTHER PETER--
--THEY KNOW ME FOR WHAT I TRULY AM!
MAYBE I'M TIRED OF TRYING TO HIDE IT.
I ONLY DID IT FOR KITTY AND PETER'S BENEFIT, ANYWAY...
...AND ONCE THEY DIE...
...THERE'S NO MORE POINT.
ALL MY POWER-- MUTANT AND MAGICKAL--
--CAN'T HELP THE TWO I LOVE BEST. CAN'T HELP MYSELF! CAN'T HELP ANYONE!!
BECAUSE IF I HEAL THEM, THAT CURE IS SURE TO PROVE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE. IT'LL BE TINGED AND TWISTED BY THE EVIL THAT'S A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF ME.
SO THIS IS... LIMBO.
YEAHPP!
LOOKS LIKE PARADISE.
IT ISN'T.
I WONDER WHY I EVEN BOTHER? THE HARDER I TRY TO HEAL THIS LAND, OR MYSELF-- THE MORE I SEEM TO WIN MY WAR WITH S'YM--
--THE MORE I LOSE MYSELF TO THE DARK SIDE OF MY SOUL.
KITTY AND PETER ARE MY BALANCE--THEY ANCHORED ME TO MY HUMANITY--
--WITHOUT THEM, I'M DONE.


EASY SOLUTION TO THAT, SWEETLING!
LEAVE LIMBO TO S'YM!
NO MORE MAGIC, NO MORE MUTANT POWERS--
--ILLYANA WILL BE THE SWEET, INNOCENT, LOVELY LITTLE GIRL EVERYONE WANTS YOU TO BE.
THAT DECISION, DEMON...
...IS FOR *ILLYANA ALONE* TO MAKE!
I HAVE FROZEN HIM IN PLACE.
HIS SUBSTANCE IS ORGANIC CIRCUITRY, NO TROUBLE AT ALL FOR MY MAGNETIC POWER...
...TO DESTROY.
YOU'D DO THAT FOR ME?!
YOU ARE MY STUDENT.
YOUR WELFARE...
...IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.
BUT LIMBO IS *MY* REALM.
AND THIS MESS...
...IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.
I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MY OWN PROBLEMS, DON'T I?
AND THE WAY I DO IT IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT I CHOOSE TO DO-- THAT'S WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
LET S'YM GO.
I'LL FIND A BETTER WAY TO BEAT HIM.


WE BOTH HAVE DEMONS IN OUR SOULS, ILLYANA.
YOURS HAVE A PHYSICAL BEING AS WELL AND CAN BE CONFRONTED DIRECTLY, BUT MINE ARE NO LESS FEARSOME.
WE HAVE BOTH DONE THINGS THAT WILL MARK US FOR LIFE, THAT CANNOT BE UNDONE OR FORGOTTEN AND MAY NEVER BE ATONED FOR. OUR CHOICE IS TO BE OVERWHELMED BY THEM-- TO YIELD TO DESPAIR-- AND LET OUR PAST DICTATE OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE--
-- YOU TO BE...
...THE DEMON SORCERESS...
...AND I, THE EVIL MUTANT.
OR, WE CAN ACCEPT WHAT WE WERE AND ARE...
...AND GO ON, REGARDLESS.
LEARNING AND GROWING AS WE DO.
WE COULD LOSE.
DOES THAT MEAN...
...WE SHOULD NOT TRY?
FRIENDS CAN AID US, BUT IN THE END, WE MUST STAND ALONE.
HEY, ILLYANA-- GAME'S READY TO START!
DACOSTA
YOU PART OF THE TEAM, OR WHAT?!
AM I, SAM?
YOU BETCHA!
THANKS, MAGNETO.
I OWE YOU, TEACH.
MY PLEASURE.
IT IS WHY I AM HERE, ILLYANA.
AND WHY IT MAKES ME PROUD THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO STAY.
NEXT: GALA!

MARVEL®

THE NEW MUTANTS®

53
JULY
CC 02207

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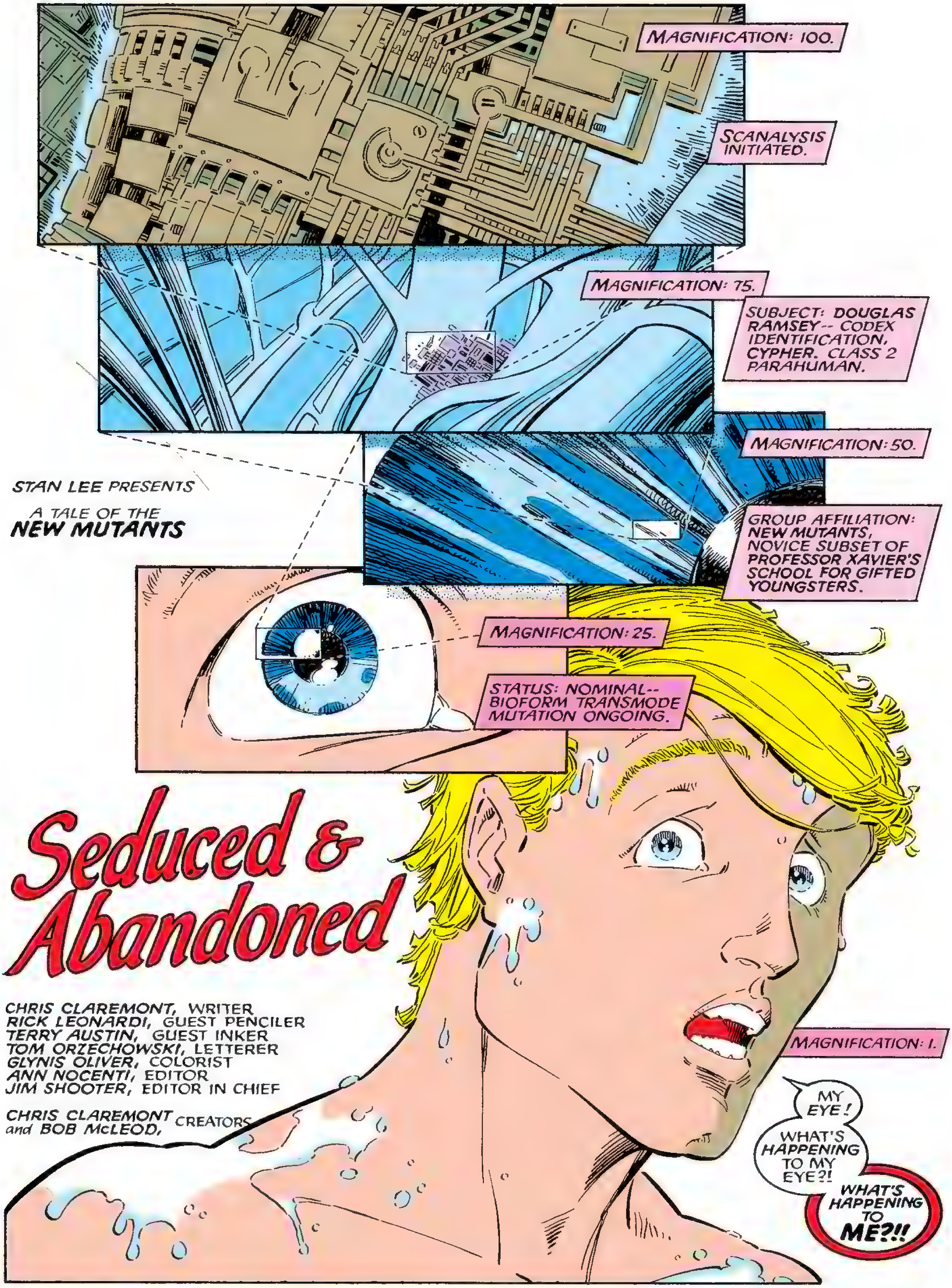
HE'S TURNED HER INTO CIRCUITRY!
STOP IT DOUG-- YOU'LL *KILL* HER!
LEONARDI + BOSCIO


MAGNIFICATION: 100.
SCANALYSIS INITIATED.
MAGNIFICATION: 75.
SUBJECT: DOUGLAS RAMSEY-- CODEX IDENTIFICATION, CYPHER. CLASS 2 PARAHUMAN.
MAGNIFICATION: 50.
GROUP AFFILIATION: NEW MUTANTS, NOVICE SUBSET OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
STAN LEE PRESENTS
A TALE OF THE NEW MUTANTS
MAGNIFICATION: 25.
STATUS: NOMINAL-- BIOFORM TRANSMODE MUTATION ONGOING.
Seduced & Abandoned
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
RICK LEONARDI, GUEST PENCILER
TERRY AUSTIN, GUEST INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF
CHRIS CLAREMONT and BOB McLEOD, CREATORS
MAGNIFICATION: 1.
MY EYE!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY EYE?!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!!

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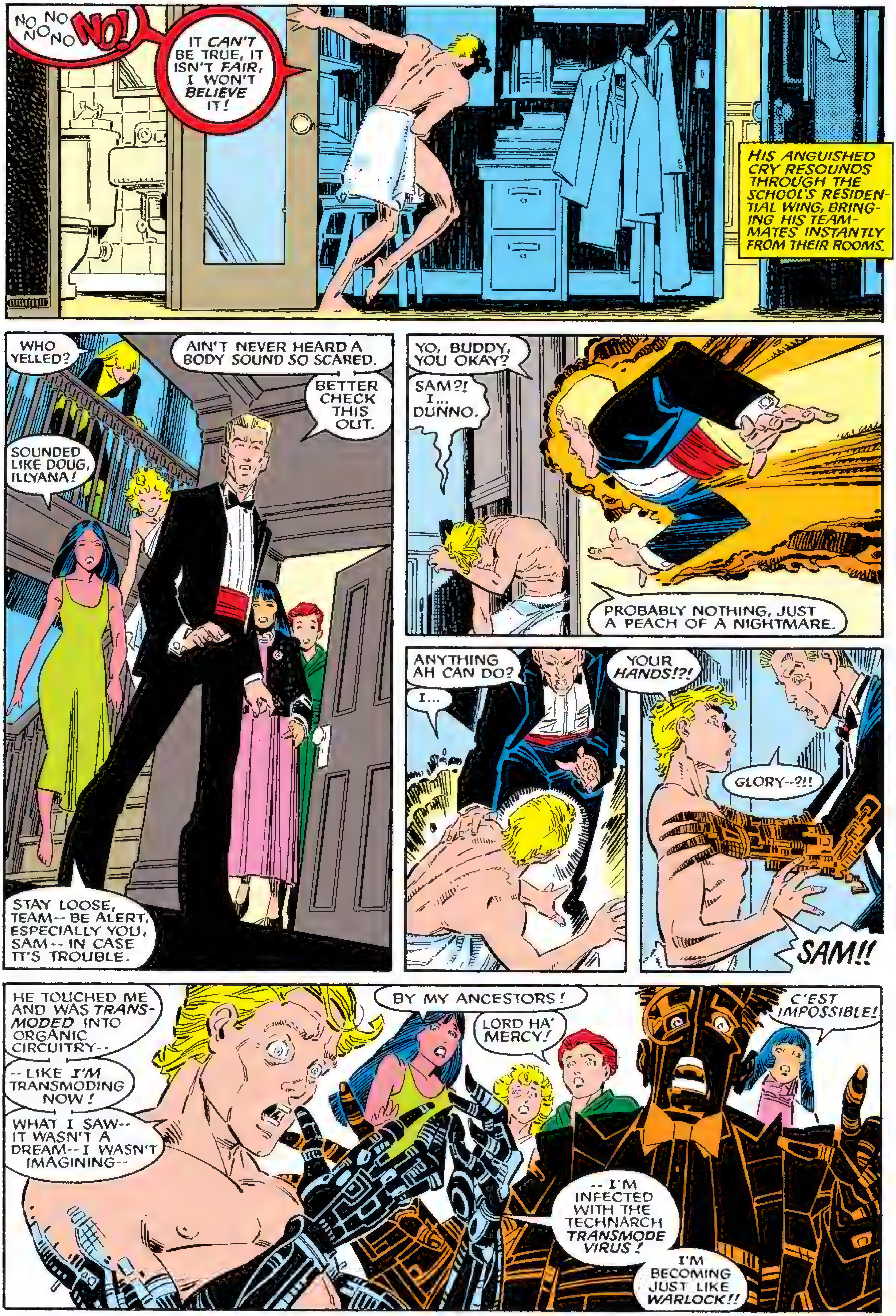
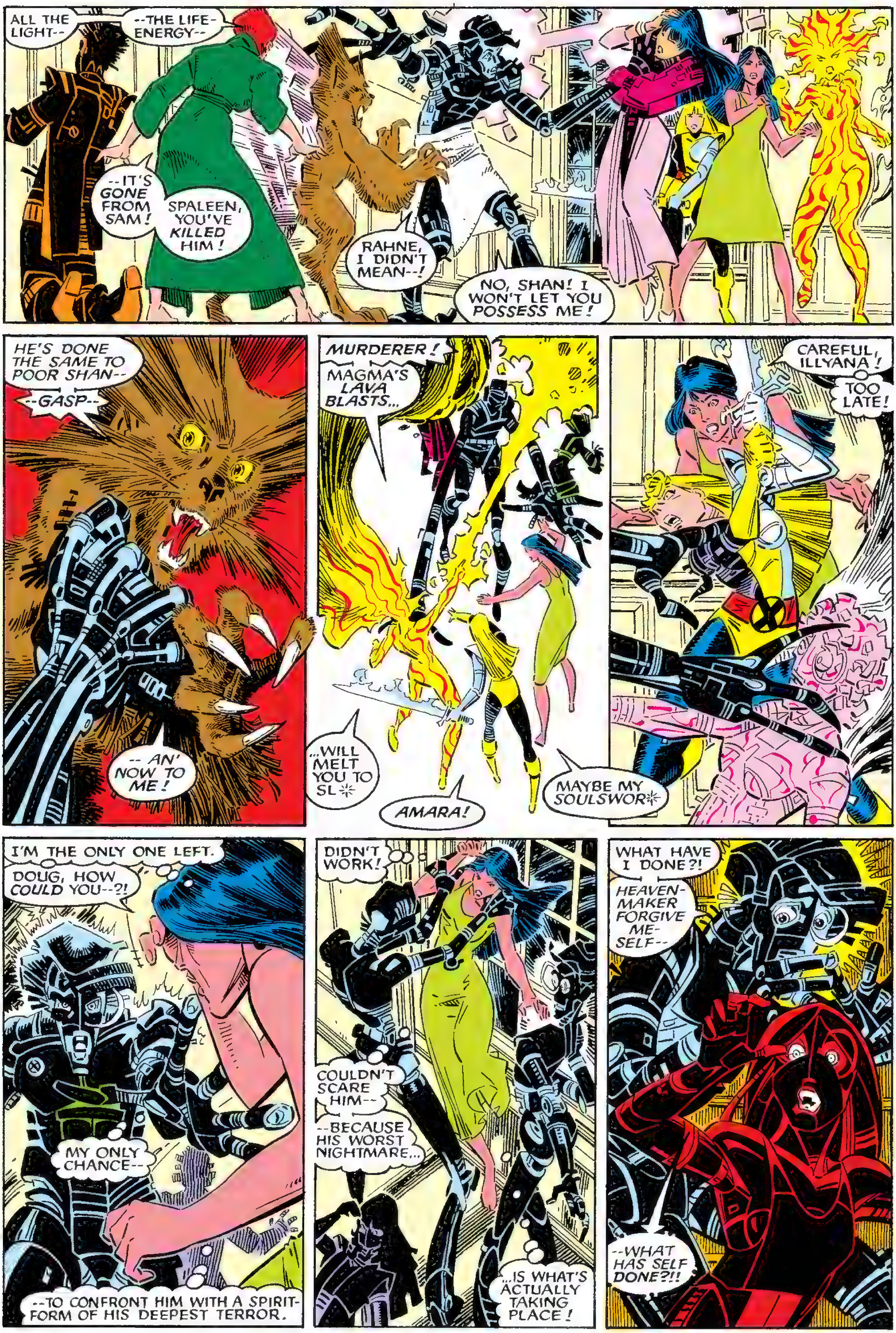
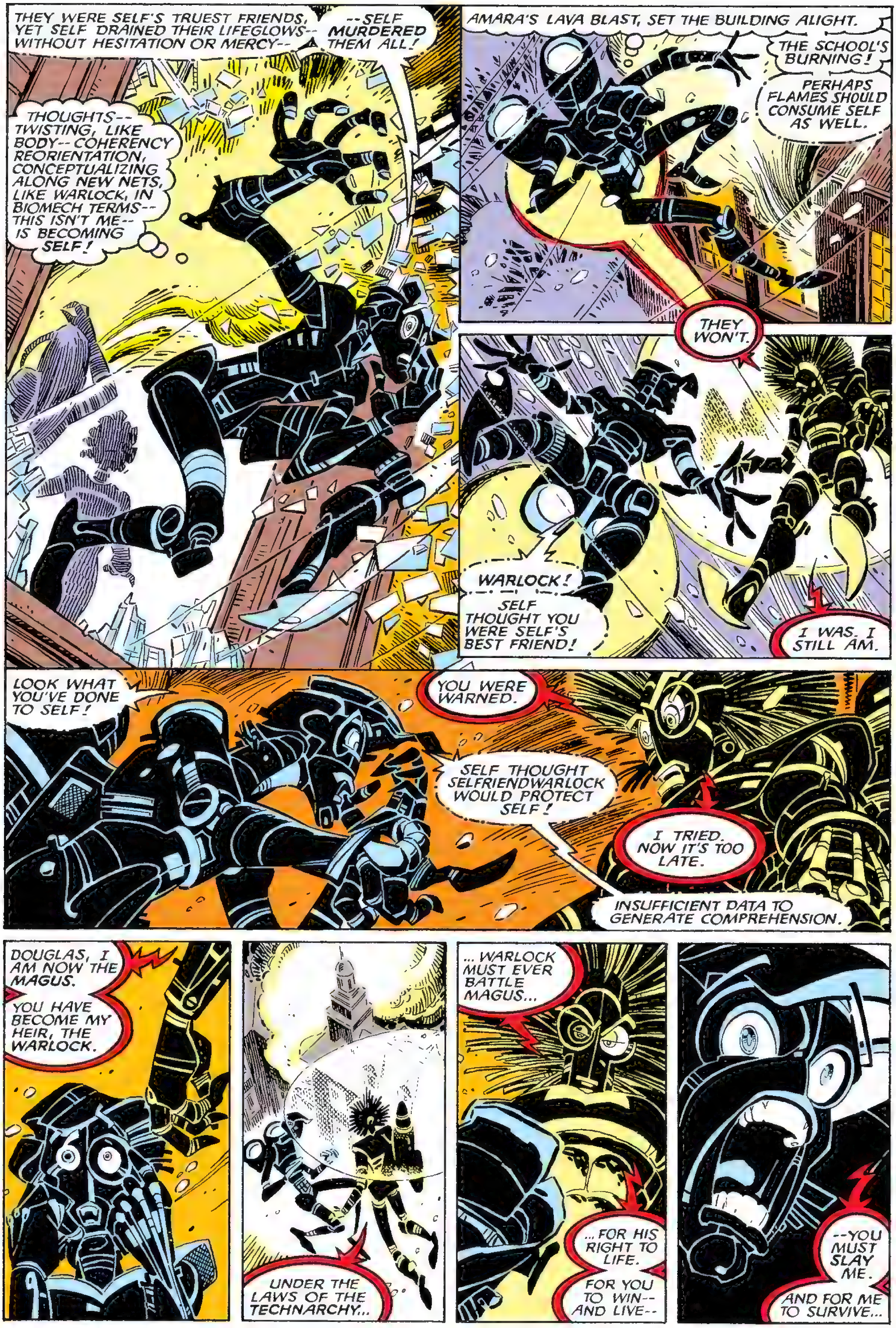
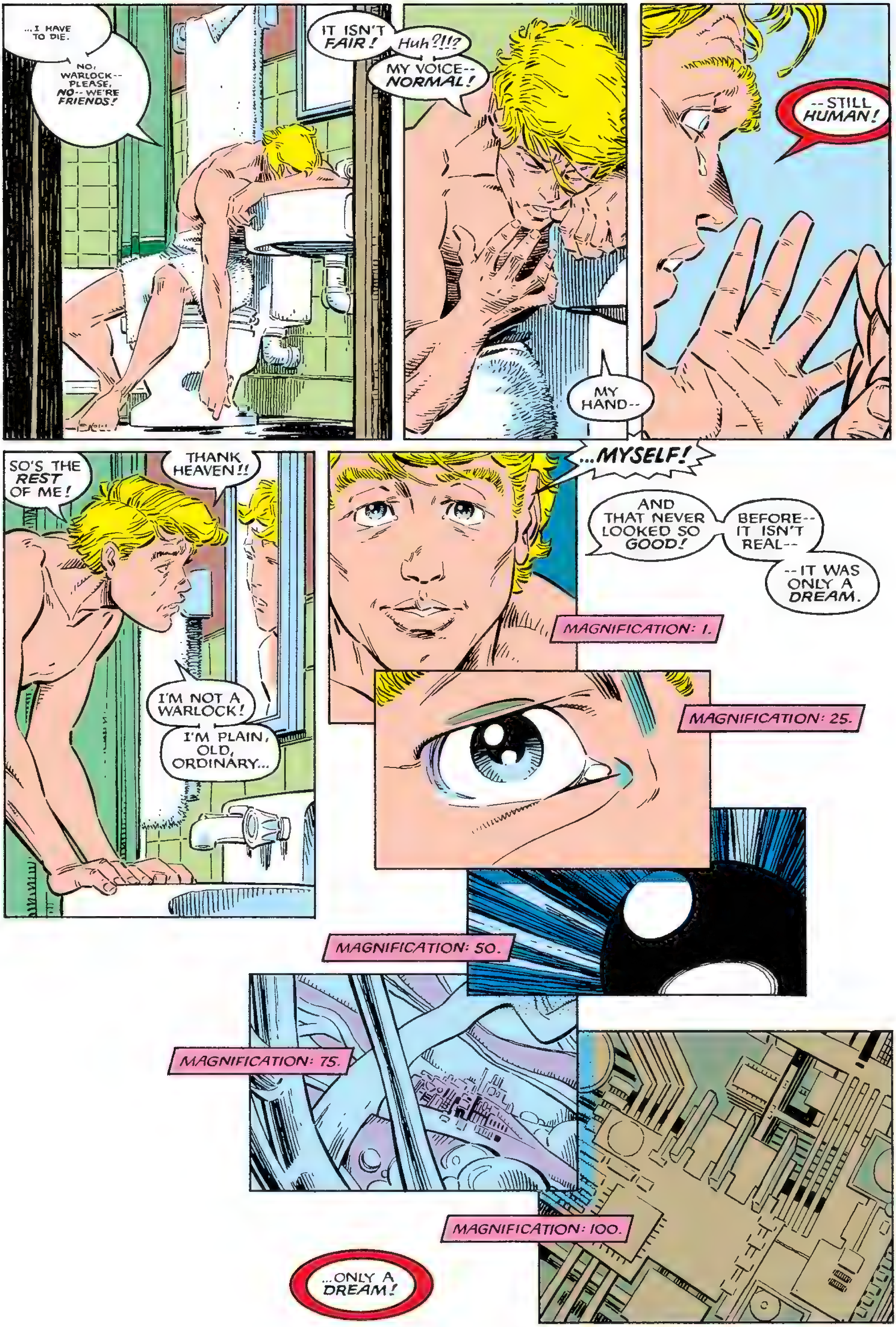
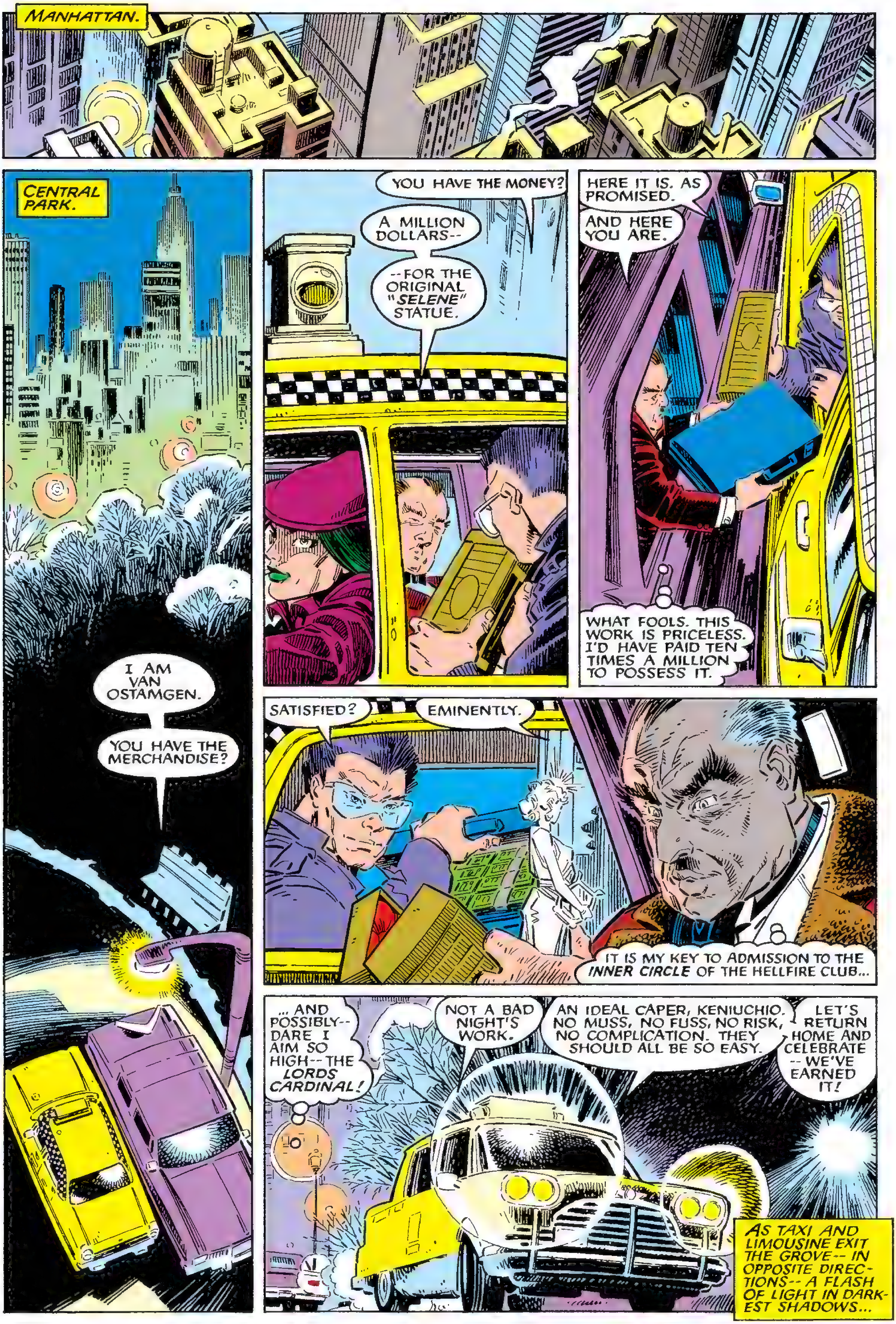
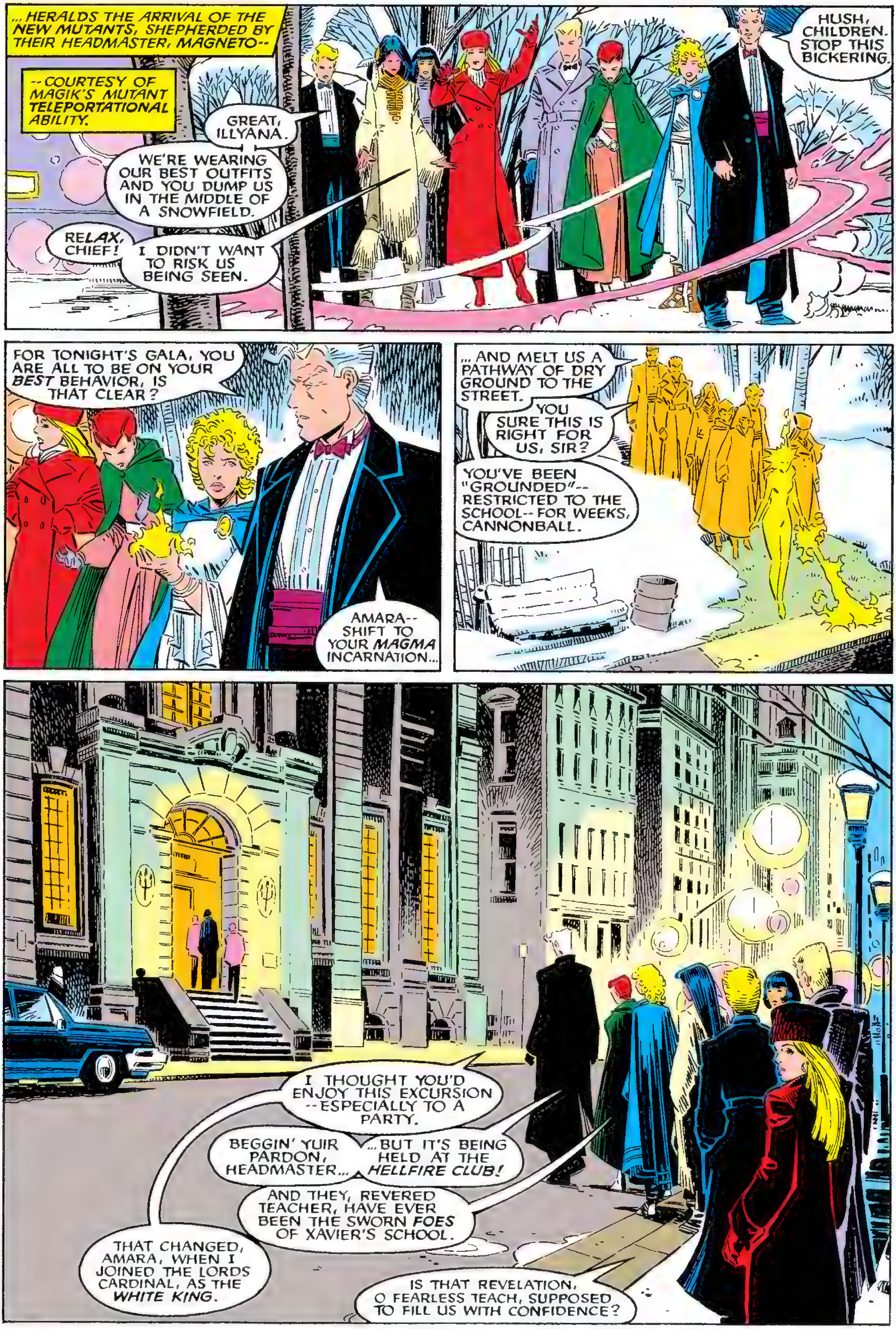

NO NO NO NO NO!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE, IT ISN'T FAIR, I WON'T BELIEVE IT!
HIS ANGUISHED CRY RESOUNDS THROUGH THE SCHOOL'S RESIDENTIAL WING, BRINGING HIS TEAMMATES INSTANTLY FROM THEIR ROOMS.
WHO YELLED?
AIN'T NEVER HEARD A BODY SOUND SO SCARED.
BETTER CHECK THIS OUT.
SOUNDED LIKE DOUG, ILLYANA!
STAY LOOSE, TEAM-- BE ALERT, ESPECIALLY YOU, SAM-- IN CASE IT'S TROUBLE.
YO, BUDDY, YOU OKAY?
SAM?! I... DUNNO.
PROBABLY NOTHING, JUST A PEACH OF A NIGHTMARE.
ANYTHING AH CAN DO?
I...
YOUR HANDS!?!
GLORY--?!!
SAM!!
HE TOUCHED ME AND WAS TRANSMODED INTO ORGANIC CIRCUITRY--
--LIKE I'M TRANSMODING NOW!
WHAT I SAW-- IT WASN'T A DREAM-- I WASN'T IMAGINING--
BY MY ANCESTORS!
LORD HA' MERCY!
C'EST IMPOSSIBLE!
--I'M INFECTED WITH THE TECHNARCH TRANSMODE VIRUS!
I'M BECOMING JUST LIKE WARLOCK!!

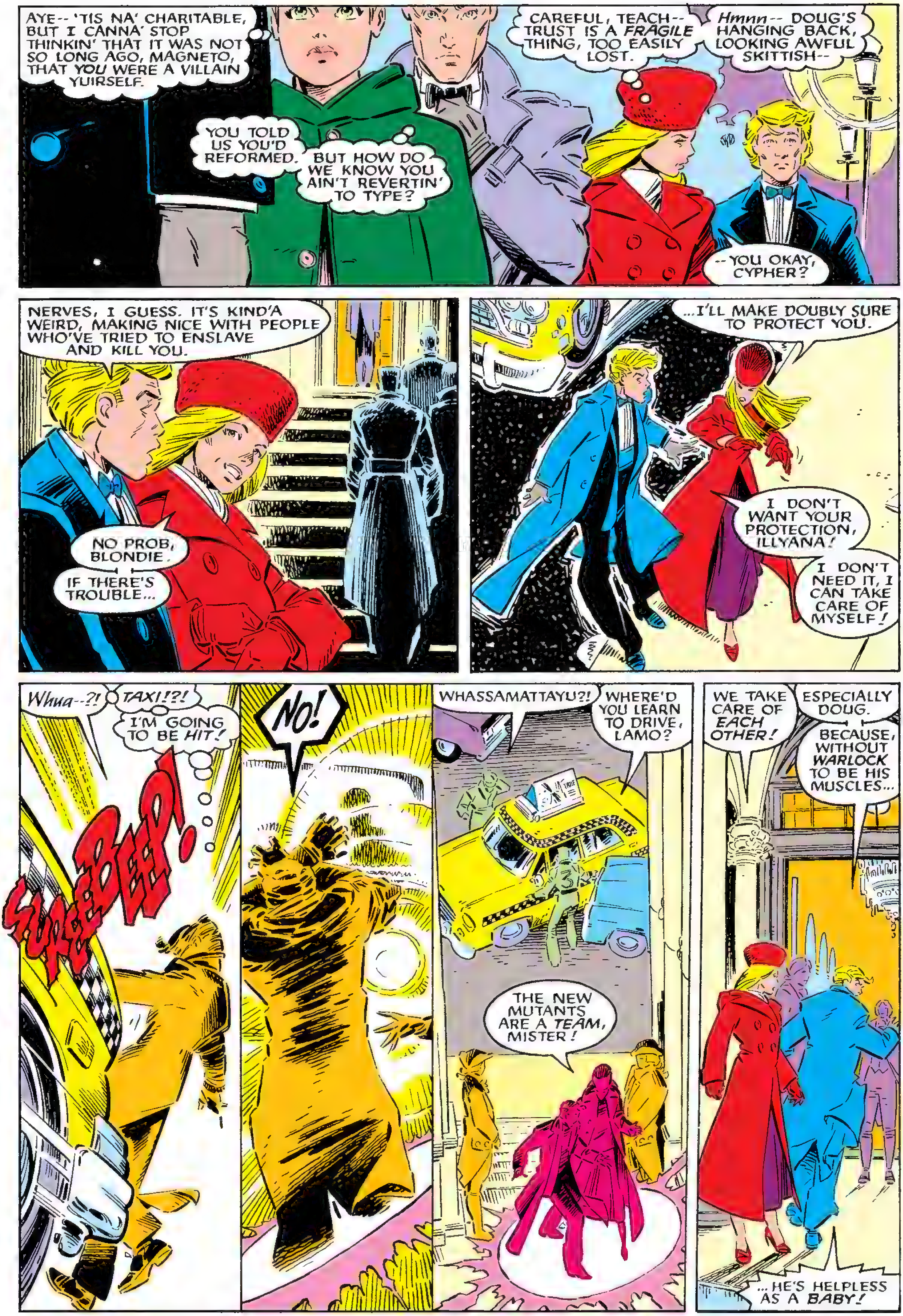

ALL THE LIGHT--
--THE LIFE-ENERGY--
--IT'S GONE FROM SAM!
SPALEEN, YOU'VE KILLED HIM!
RAHNE, I DIDN'T MEAN--!
NO, SHAN! I WON'T LET YOU POSSESS ME!
HE'S DONE THE SAME TO POOR SHAN--
--GASP--
--AN' NOW TO ME!
MURDERER!
MAGMA'S LAVA BLASTS...
...WILL MELT YOU TO SL✳
AMARA!
MAYBE MY SOULSWOR✳
CAREFUL, ILLYANA!
TOO LATE!
I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT.
DOUG, HOW COULD YOU--?!
MY ONLY CHANCE--
--TO CONFRONT HIM WITH A SPIRIT-FORM OF HIS DEEPEST TERROR.
DIDN'T WORK!
COULDN'T SCARE HIM--
--BECAUSE HIS WORST NIGHTMARE...
...IS WHAT'S ACTUALLY TAKING PLACE!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
HEAVEN-MAKER FORGIVE ME-SELF--
--WHAT HAS SELF DONE?!!

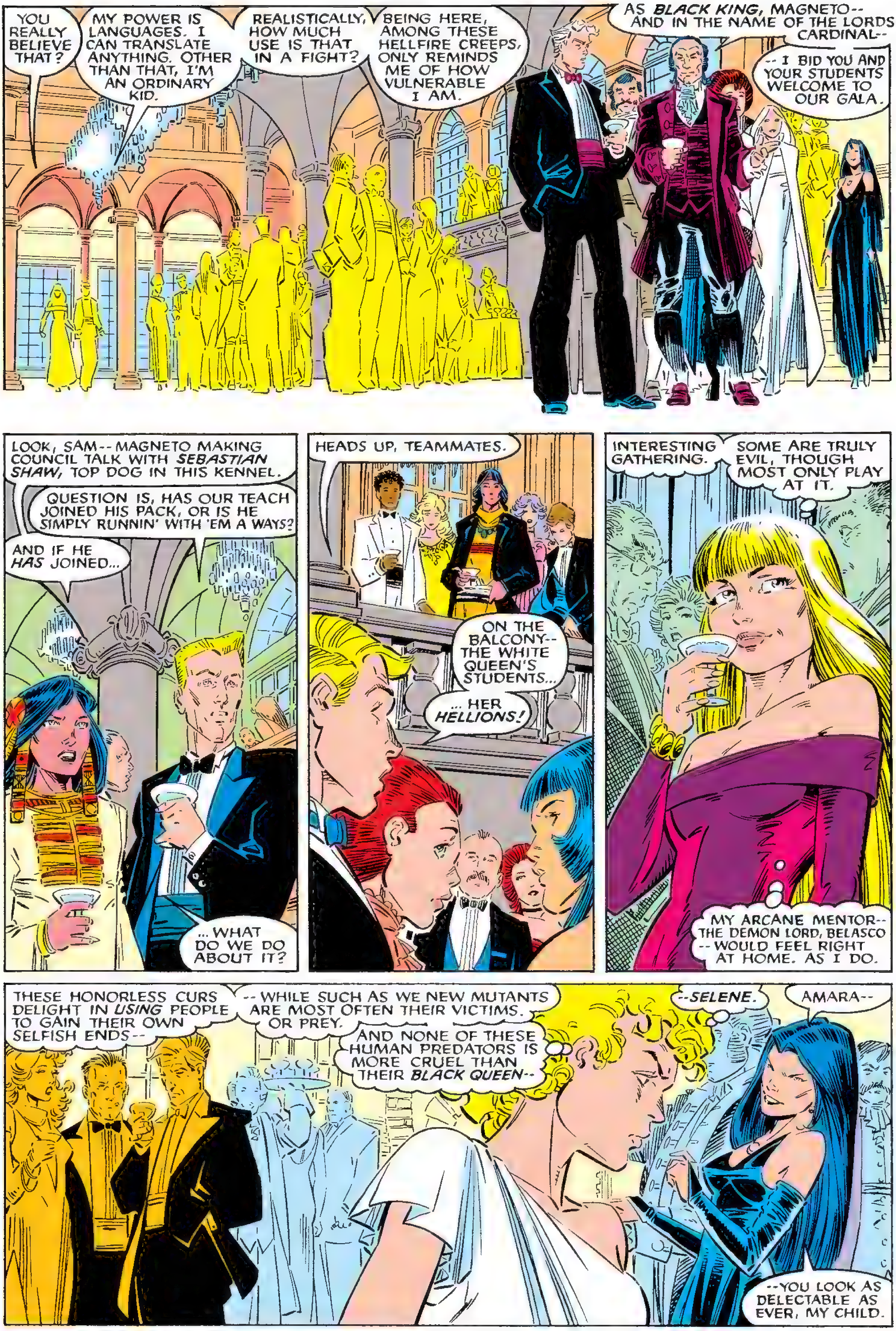

THEY WERE SELF'S TRUEST FRIENDS, YET SELF DRAINED THEIR LIFEGLOWS-- WITHOUT HESITATION OR MERCY--
--SELF MURDERED THEM ALL!
THOUGHTS-- TWISTING, LIKE BODY-- COHERENCY REORIENTATION, CONCEPTUALIZING ALONG NEW NETS, LIKE WARLOCK, IN BIOMECH TERMS-- THIS ISN'T ME-- IS BECOMING SELF!
AMARA'S LAVA BLAST, SET THE BUILDING ALIGHT.
THE SCHOOL'S BURNING!
PERHAPS FLAMES SHOULD CONSUME SELF AS WELL.
THEY WON'T.
WARLOCK!
SELF THOUGHT YOU WERE SELF'S BEST FRIEND!
I WAS. I STILL AM.
LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO SELF!
YOU WERE WARNED.
SELF THOUGHT SELFRIENDWARLOCK WOULD PROTECT SELF!
I TRIED. NOW IT'S TOO LATE.
INSUFFICIENT DATA TO GENERATE COMPREHENSION.
DOUGLAS, I AM NOW THE MAGUS.
YOU HAVE BECOME MY HEIR, THE WARLOCK.
UNDER THE LAWS OF THE TECHNARCHY...
...WARLOCK MUST EVER BATTLE MAGUS...
...FOR HIS RIGHT TO LIFE.
FOR YOU TO WIN-- AND LIVE--
--YOU MUST SLAY ME.
AND FOR ME TO SURVIVE...

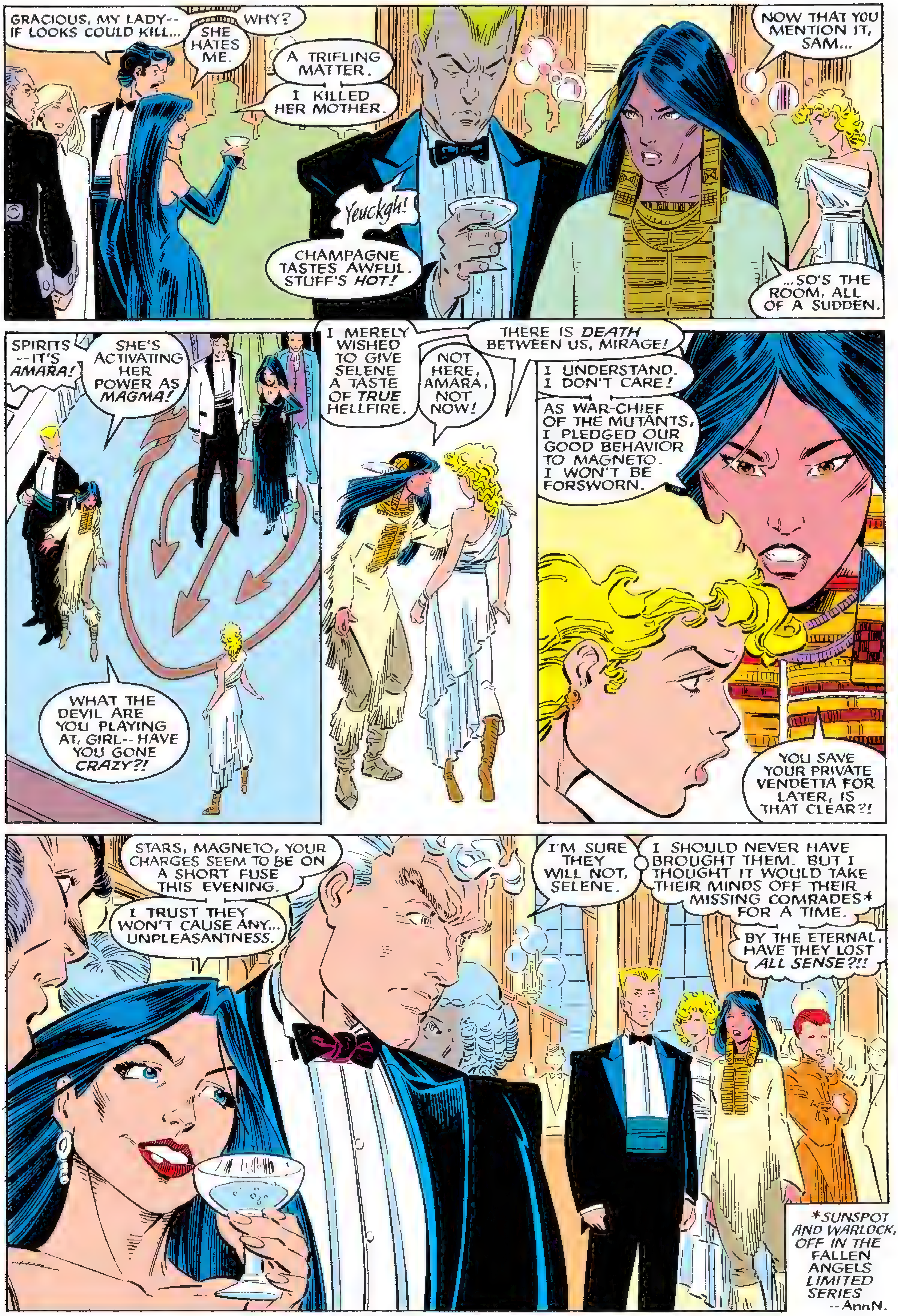

...I HAVE TO DIE.
NO, WARLOCK-- PLEASE, NO-- WE'RE FRIENDS!
IT ISN'T FAIR!
Huh?!!?
MY VOICE-- NORMAL!
MY HAND--
--STILL HUMAN!
SO'S THE REST OF ME!
THANK HEAVEN!!
I'M NOT A WARLOCK!
I'M PLAIN, OLD, ORDINARY...
...MYSELF!
AND THAT NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD!
BEFORE-- IT ISN'T REAL--
--IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
MAGNIFICATION: 1.
MAGNIFICATION: 25.
MAGNIFICATION: 50.
MAGNIFICATION: 75.
MAGNIFICATION: 100.
...ONLY A DREAM!


MANHATTAN.
CENTRAL PARK.
I AM VAN OSTAMGEN.
YOU HAVE THE MERCHANDISE?
YOU HAVE THE MONEY?
A MILLION DOLLARS--
--FOR THE ORIGINAL "SELENE" STATUE.
HERE IT IS. AS PROMISED.
AND HERE YOU ARE.
WHAT FOOLS. THIS WORK IS PRICELESS. I'D HAVE PAID TEN TIMES A MILLION TO POSSESS IT.
SATISFIED?
EMINENTLY.
IT IS MY KEY TO ADMISSION TO THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB...
... AND POSSIBLY-- DARE I AIM SO HIGH-- THE LORDS CARDINAL!
NOT A BAD NIGHT'S WORK.
AN IDEAL CAPER, KENIUCHIO. NO MUSS, NO FUSS, NO RISK, NO COMPLICATION. THEY SHOULD ALL BE SO EASY.
LET'S RETURN HOME AND CELEBRATE -- WE'VE EARNED IT!
AS TAXI AND LIMOUSINE EXIT THE GROVE-- IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS-- A FLASH OF LIGHT IN DARKEST SHADOWS...

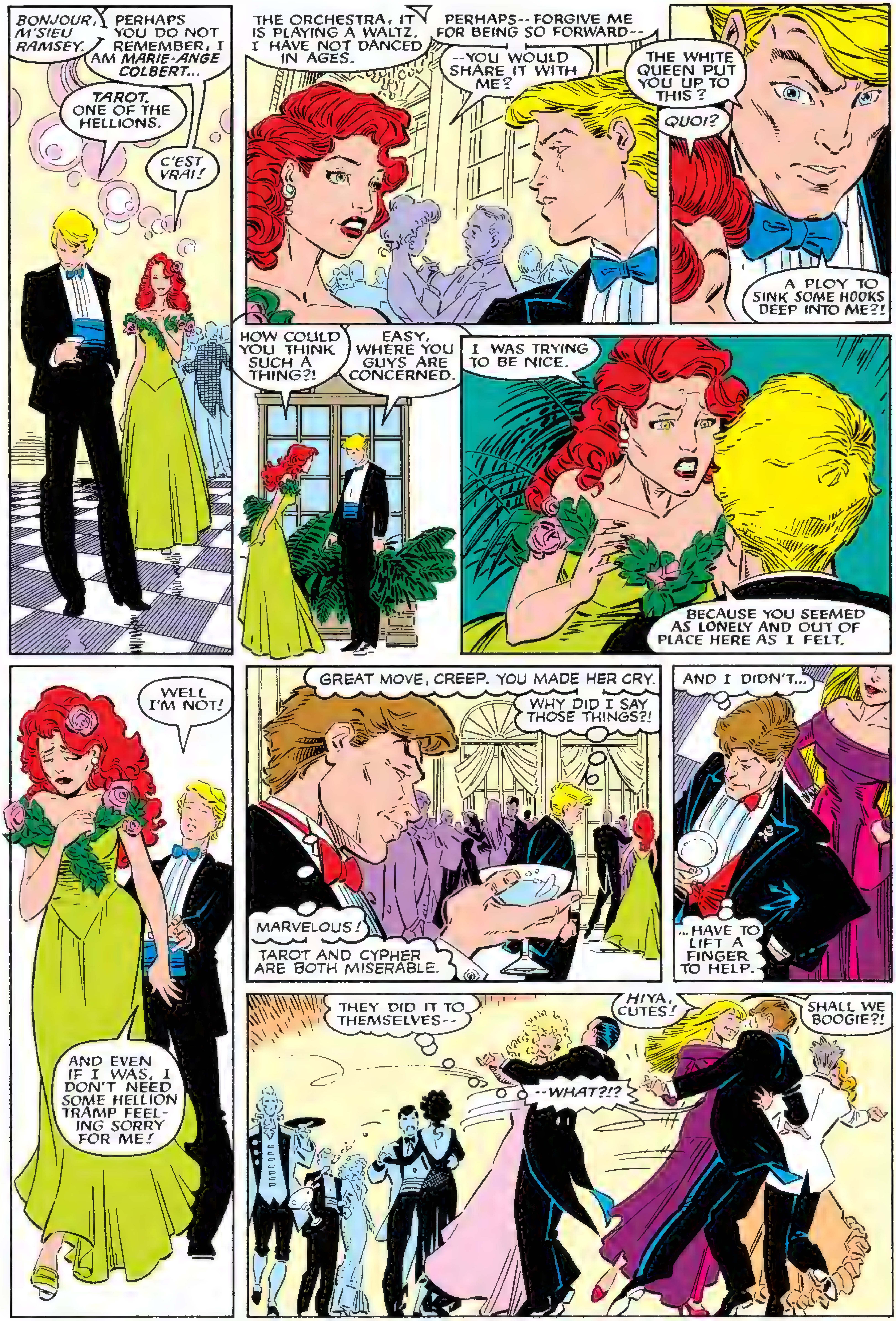

...HERALDS THE ARRIVAL OF THE *NEW MUTANTS*, SHEPHERDED BY THEIR HEADMASTER, *MAGNETO*--
--COURTESY OF MAGIK'S MUTANT TELEPORTATIONAL ABILITY.
GREAT, ILLYANA.
WE'RE WEARING OUR BEST OUTFITS AND YOU DUMP US IN THE MIDDLE OF A SNOWFIELD.
RE*LAX*, CHIEF!
I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK US BEING SEEN.
HUSH, CHILDREN. STOP THIS BICKERING.
FOR TONIGHT'S GALA, YOU ARE ALL TO BE ON YOUR *BEST* BEHAVIOR, IS THAT CLEAR?
AMARA-- SHIFT TO YOUR *MAGMA* INCARNATION...
...AND MELT US A PATHWAY OF DRY GROUND TO THE STREET.
YOU SURE THIS IS RIGHT FOR US, SIR?
YOU'VE BEEN "GROUNDED"-- RESTRICTED TO THE SCHOOL-- FOR WEEKS, CANNONBALL.
I THOUGHT *YOU'D* ENJOY THIS EXCURSION --ESPECIALLY TO A PARTY.
BEGGIN' YUIR PARDON, HEADMASTER...
...BUT IT'S BEING HELD AT THE *HELLFIRE CLUB!*
AND THEY, REVERED TEACHER, HAVE EVER BEEN THE SWORN *FOES* OF XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
THAT CHANGED, AMARA, WHEN I JOINED THE LORDS CARDINAL, AS THE *WHITE KING*.
IS THAT REVELATION, O FEARLESS TEACH, SUPPOSED TO FILL US WITH CONFIDENCE?

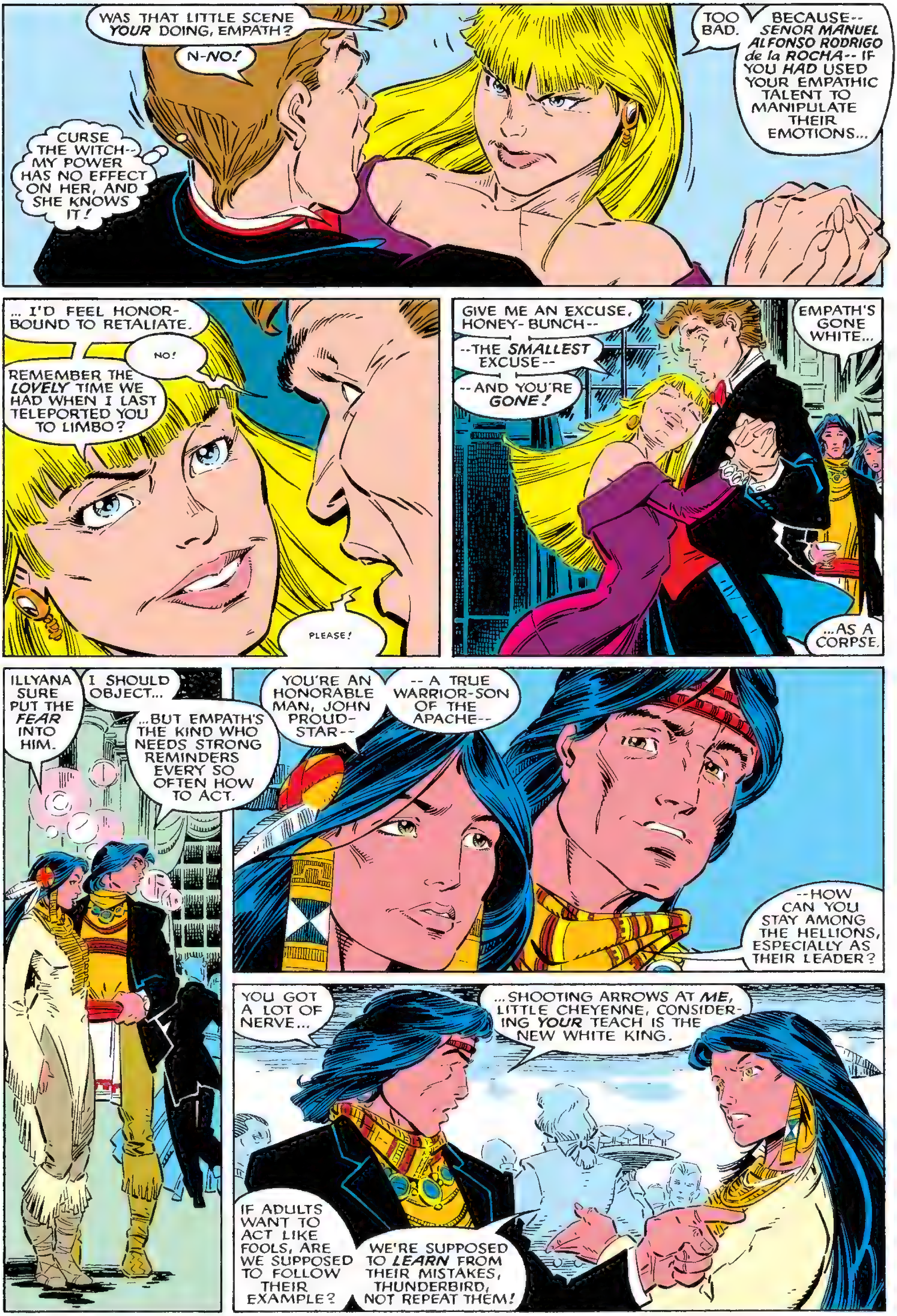

AYE-- 'TIS NA' CHARITABLE, BUT I CANNA' STOP THINKIN' THAT IT WAS NOT SO LONG AGO, MAGNETO, THAT *YOU* WERE A VILLAIN YUIRSELF.
YOU TOLD US YOU'D REFORMED.
BUT HOW DO WE KNOW YOU AIN'T REVERTIN' TO TYPE?
CAREFUL, TEACH-- TRUST IS A *FRAGILE* THING, TOO EASILY LOST.
Hmmn-- DOUG'S HANGING BACK, LOOKING AWFUL SKITTISH--
--YOU OKAY, CYPHER?
NERVES, I GUESS. IT'S KIND'A WEIRD, MAKING NICE WITH PEOPLE WHO'VE TRIED TO ENSLAVE AND KILL YOU.
NO PROB, BLONDIE.
IF THERE'S TROUBLE...
...I'LL MAKE DOUBLY SURE TO PROTECT YOU.
I DON'T WANT YOUR PROTECTION, ILLYANA!
I DON'T NEED IT, I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
Whua--?!
TAXI!?!
I'M GOING TO BE *HIT!*
SKREEBEEP!
NO!
WHASSAMATTAYU?!
WHERE'D YOU LEARN TO DRIVE, LAMO?
THE NEW MUTANTS ARE A *TEAM*, MISTER!
WE TAKE CARE OF *EACH OTHER!*
ESPECIALLY DOUG.
BECAUSE, WITHOUT *WARLOCK* TO BE HIS MUSCLES...
...HE'S HELPLESS AS A *BABY!*

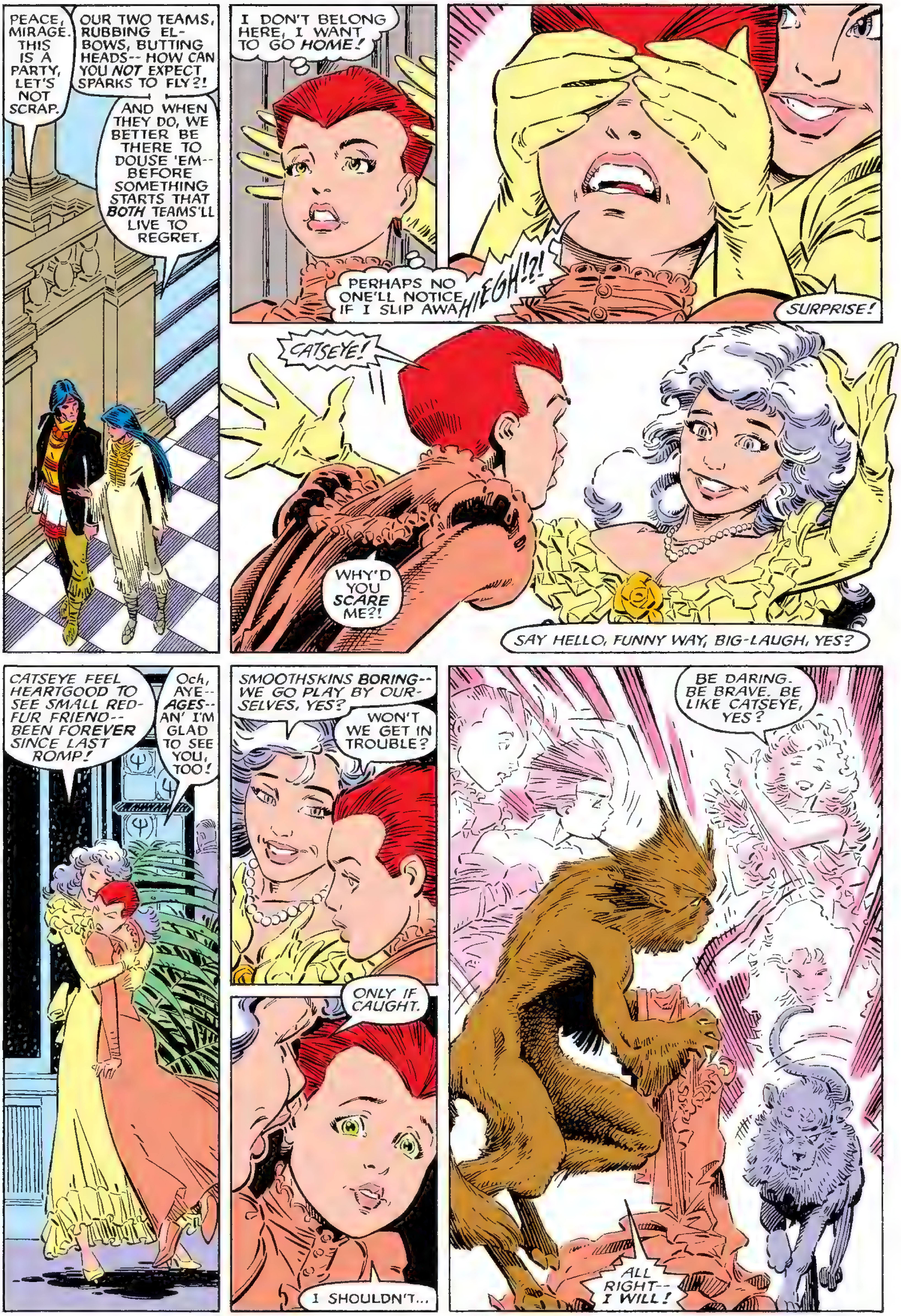

YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?
MY POWER IS LANGUAGES. I CAN TRANSLATE ANYTHING. OTHER THAN THAT, I'M AN ORDINARY KID.
REALISTICALLY, HOW MUCH USE IS THAT IN A FIGHT?
BEING HERE, AMONG THESE HELLFIRE CREEPS, ONLY REMINDS ME OF HOW VULNERABLE I AM.
AS *BLACK KING,* MAGNETO-- AND IN THE NAME OF THE LORDS CARDINAL--
-- I BID YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS WELCOME TO OUR GALA.
LOOK, SAM--MAGNETO MAKING COUNCIL TALK WITH *SEBASTIAN SHAW,* TOP DOG IN THIS KENNEL.
QUESTION IS, HAS OUR TEACH JOINED HIS PACK, OR IS HE SIMPLY RUNNIN' WITH 'EM A WAYS?
AND IF HE *HAS* JOINED...
... WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?
HEADS UP, TEAMMATES.
ON THE BALCONY-- THE WHITE QUEEN'S STUDENTS...
... HER *HELLIONS!*
INTERESTING GATHERING.
SOME ARE TRULY EVIL, THOUGH MOST ONLY PLAY AT IT.
MY ARCANE MENTOR-- THE DEMON LORD, BELASCO -- WOULD FEEL RIGHT AT HOME. AS I DO.
THESE HONORLESS CURS DELIGHT IN *USING* PEOPLE TO GAIN THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS--
-- WHILE SUCH AS WE NEW MUTANTS ARE MOST OFTEN THEIR VICTIMS. OR PREY.
AND NONE OF THESE HUMAN PREDATORS IS MORE CRUEL THAN THEIR *BLACK QUEEN*--
--*SELENE.*
AMARA--
--YOU LOOK AS DELECTABLE AS EVER, MY CHILD.

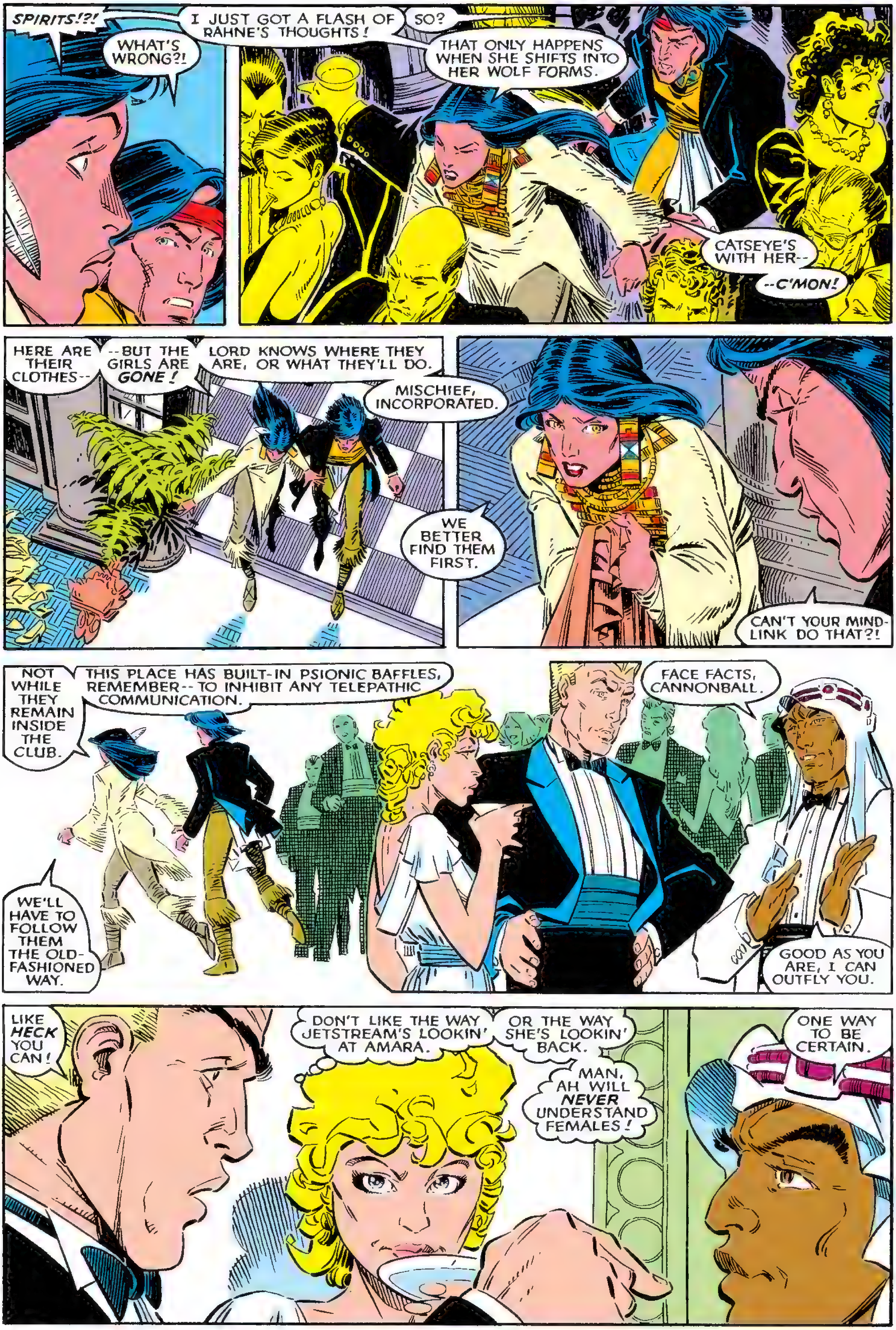

GRACIOUS, MY LADY-- IF LOOKS COULD KILL...
WHY?
SHE HATES ME.
A TRIFLING MATTER.
I KILLED HER MOTHER.
Yeuckgh!
CHAMPAGNE TASTES AWFUL. STUFF'S *HOT!*
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, SAM...
...SO'S THE ROOM, ALL OF A SUDDEN.
SPIRITS --IT'S *AMARA!*
SHE'S ACTIVATING HER POWER AS *MAGMA!*
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU PLAYING AT, GIRL-- HAVE YOU GONE *CRAZY?!*
I MERELY WISHED TO GIVE SELENE A TASTE OF *TRUE* HELLFIRE.
NOT HERE, AMARA, NOT NOW!
THERE IS *DEATH* BETWEEN US, MIRAGE!
I UNDERSTAND. I DON'T CARE!
AS WAR-CHIEF OF THE MUTANTS, I PLEDGED OUR GOOD BEHAVIOR TO MAGNETO. I WON'T BE FORSWORN.
YOU SAVE YOUR PRIVATE VENDETTA FOR LATER, IS THAT CLEAR?!
STARS, MAGNETO, YOUR CHARGES SEEM TO BE ON A SHORT FUSE THIS EVENING.
I TRUST THEY WON'T CAUSE ANY... UNPLEASANTNESS.
I'M SURE THEY WILL NOT, SELENE.
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE BROUGHT THEM. BUT I THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE THEIR MINDS OFF THEIR MISSING COMRADES* FOR A TIME.
BY THE ETERNAL, HAVE THEY LOST *ALL SENSE?!!*

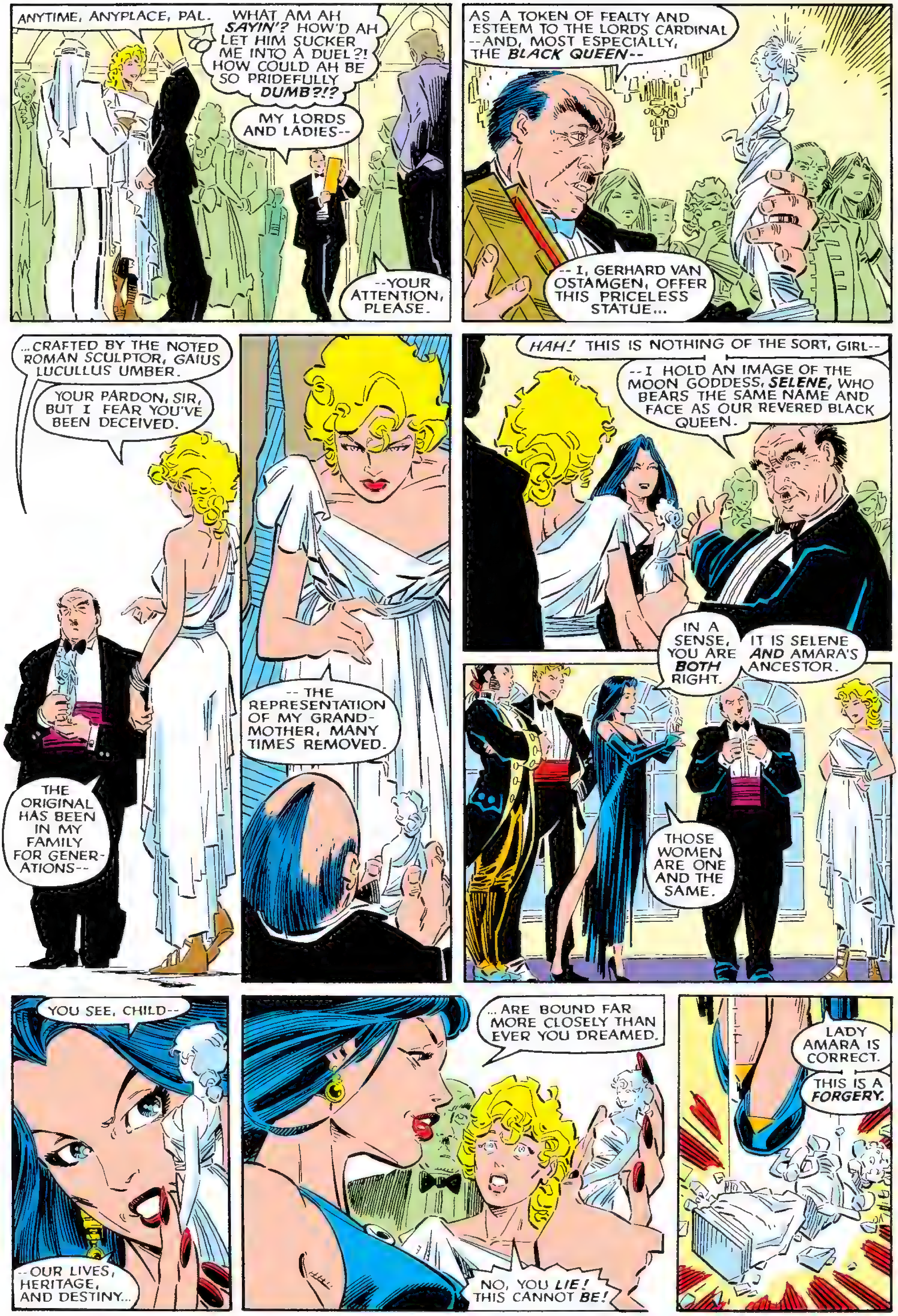
**SUNSPOT AND WARLOCK, OFF IN THE FALLEN ANGELS LIMITED SERIES*
--AnnN.

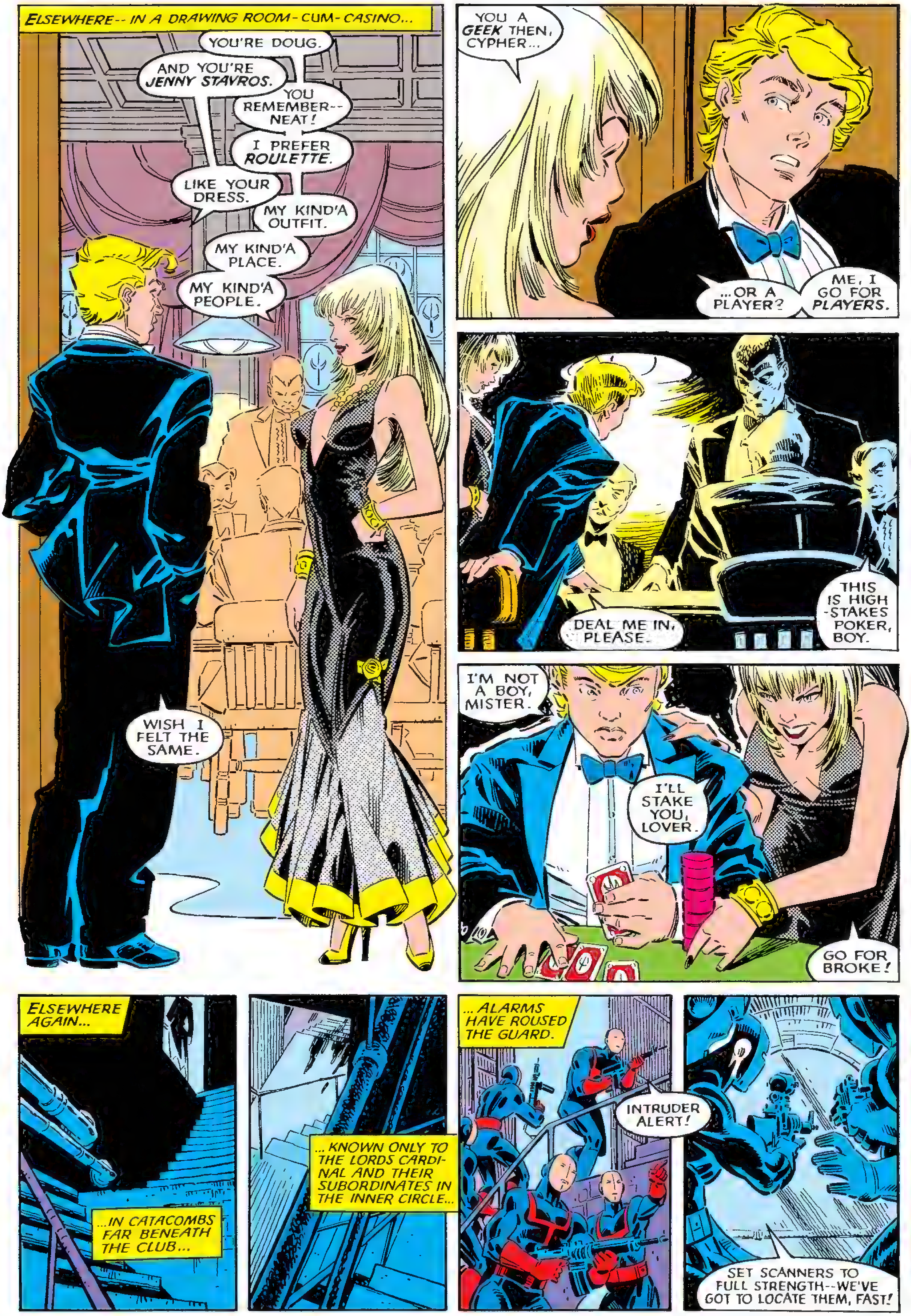

BONJOUR, M'SIEU RAMSEY.
PERHAPS YOU DO NOT REMEMBER, I AM MARIE-ANGE COLBERT...
TAROT. ONE OF THE HELLIONS.
C'EST VRAI!
THE ORCHESTRA, IT IS PLAYING A WALTZ. I HAVE NOT DANCED IN AGES.
PERHAPS--FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SO FORWARD--
--YOU WOULD SHARE IT WITH ME?
THE WHITE QUEEN PUT YOU UP TO THIS?
QUOI?
A PLOY TO SINK SOME HOOKS DEEP INTO ME?!
HOW COULD YOU THINK SUCH A THING?!
EASY, WHERE YOU GUYS ARE CONCERNED.
I WAS TRYING TO BE NICE.
BECAUSE YOU SEEMED AS LONELY AND OUT OF PLACE HERE AS I FELT.
WELL I'M NOT!
AND EVEN IF I WAS, I DON'T NEED SOME HELLION TRAMP FEELING SORRY FOR ME!
GREAT MOVE, CREEP. YOU MADE HER CRY.
WHY DID I SAY THOSE THINGS?!
MARVELOUS!
TAROT AND CYPHER ARE BOTH MISERABLE.
AND I DIDN'T...
...HAVE TO LIFT A FINGER TO HELP.
THEY DID IT TO THEMSELVES--
HIYA, CUTES!
SHALL WE BOOGIE?!
--WHAT?!?

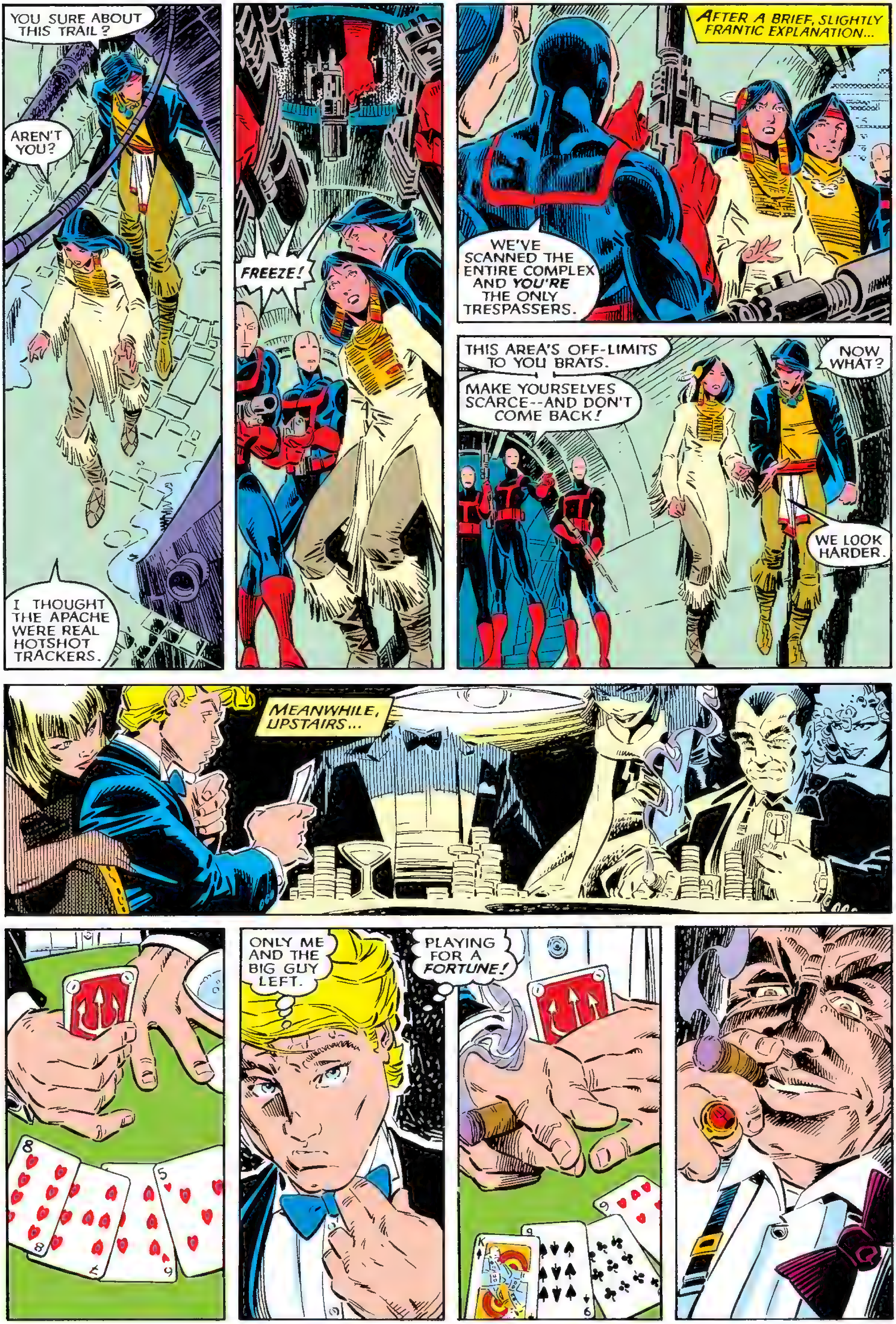

WAS THAT LITTLE SCENE *YOUR* DOING, EMPATH?
N-*NO!*
CURSE THE WITCH-- MY POWER HAS NO EFFECT ON HER, AND SHE KNOWS IT!
TOO BAD.
BECAUSE-- *SENOR MANUEL ALFONSO RODRIGO de la ROCHA*-- IF YOU *HAD* USED YOUR EMPATHIC TALENT TO MANIPULATE THEIR EMOTIONS...
... I'D FEEL HONOR-BOUND TO RETALIATE.
NO!
REMEMBER THE *LOVELY* TIME WE HAD WHEN I LAST TELEPORTED YOU TO LIMBO?
PLEASE!
GIVE ME AN EXCUSE, HONEY-BUNCH--
--THE *SMALLEST* EXCUSE--
--AND YOU'RE *GONE!*
EMPATH'S GONE WHITE...
...AS A CORPSE.
ILLYANA SURE PUT THE *FEAR* INTO HIM.
I SHOULD OBJECT...
...BUT EMPATH'S THE KIND WHO NEEDS STRONG REMINDERS EVERY SO OFTEN HOW TO ACT.
YOU'RE AN HONORABLE MAN, JOHN PROUDSTAR--
-- A TRUE WARRIOR-SON OF THE APACHE--
--HOW CAN YOU STAY AMONG THE HELLIONS, ESPECIALLY AS THEIR LEADER?
YOU GOT A LOT OF NERVE...
...SHOOTING ARROWS AT *ME,* LITTLE CHEYENNE, CONSIDERING *YOUR* TEACH IS THE NEW WHITE KING.
IF ADULTS WANT TO ACT LIKE FOOLS, ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE?
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO *LEARN* FROM THEIR MISTAKES, THUNDERBIRD, NOT REPEAT THEM!

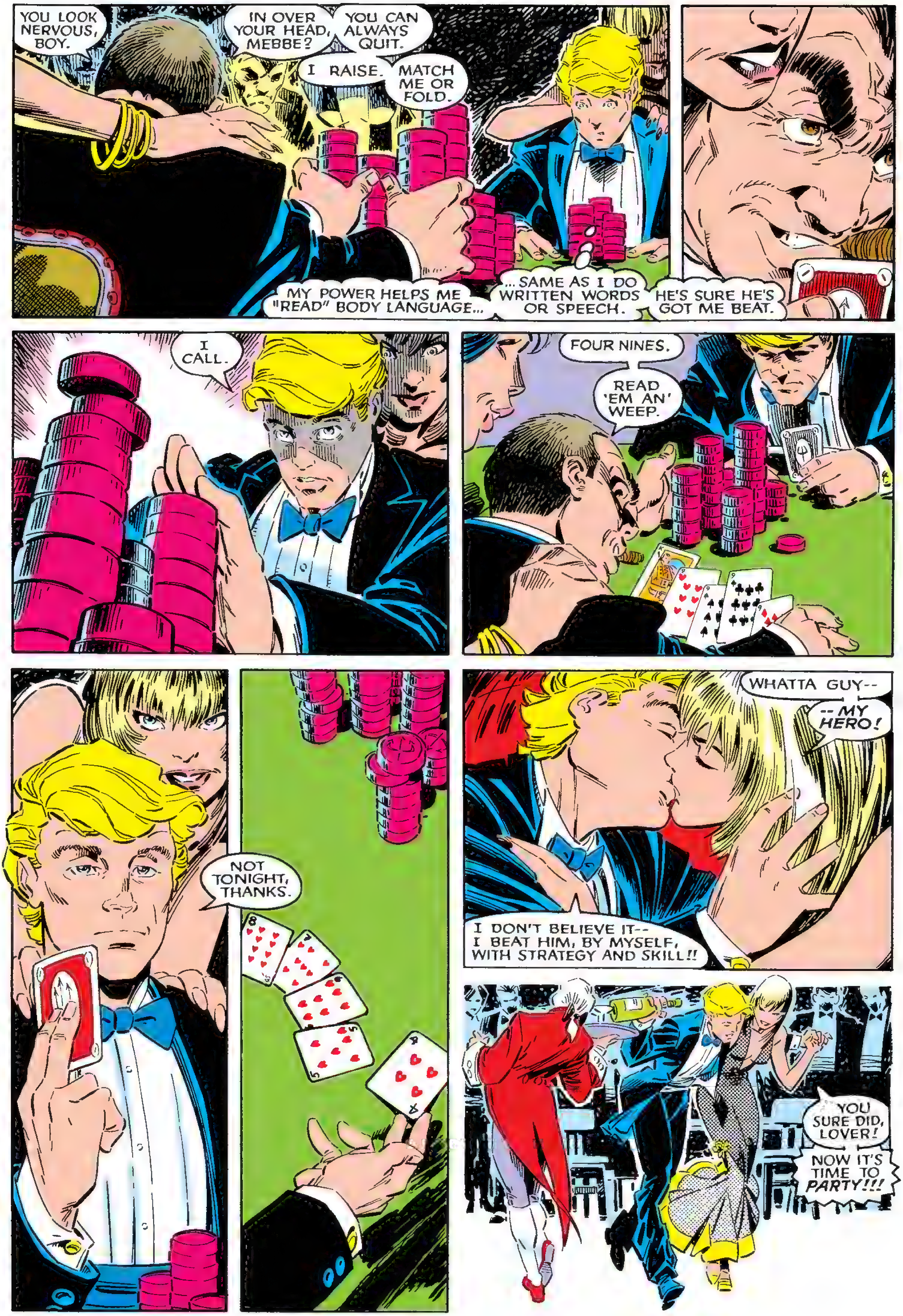

PEACE, MIRAGE. THIS IS A PARTY, LET'S NOT SCRAP.
OUR TWO TEAMS, RUBBING ELBOWS, BUTTING HEADS-- HOW CAN YOU NOT EXPECT SPARKS TO FLY?!
AND WHEN THEY DO, WE BETTER BE THERE TO DOUSE 'EM-- BEFORE SOMETHING STARTS THAT BOTH TEAMS'LL LIVE TO REGRET.
I DON'T BELONG HERE, I WANT TO GO HOME!
PERHAPS NO ONE'LL NOTICE IF I SLIP AWA
HIEGH!?!
SURPRISE!
CATSEYE!
WHY'D YOU SCARE ME?!
SAY HELLO, FUNNY WAY, BIG-LAUGH, YES?
CATSEYE FEEL HEARTGOOD TO SEE SMALL RED-FUR FRIEND-- BEEN FOREVER SINCE LAST ROMP!
Och, AYE-- AGES-- AN' I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU, TOO!
SMOOTHSKINS BORING-- WE GO PLAY BY OURSELVES, YES?
WON'T WE GET IN TROUBLE?
ONLY IF CAUGHT.
I SHOULDN'T...
BE DARING. BE BRAVE. BE LIKE CATSEYE, YES?
ALL RIGHT-- I WILL!

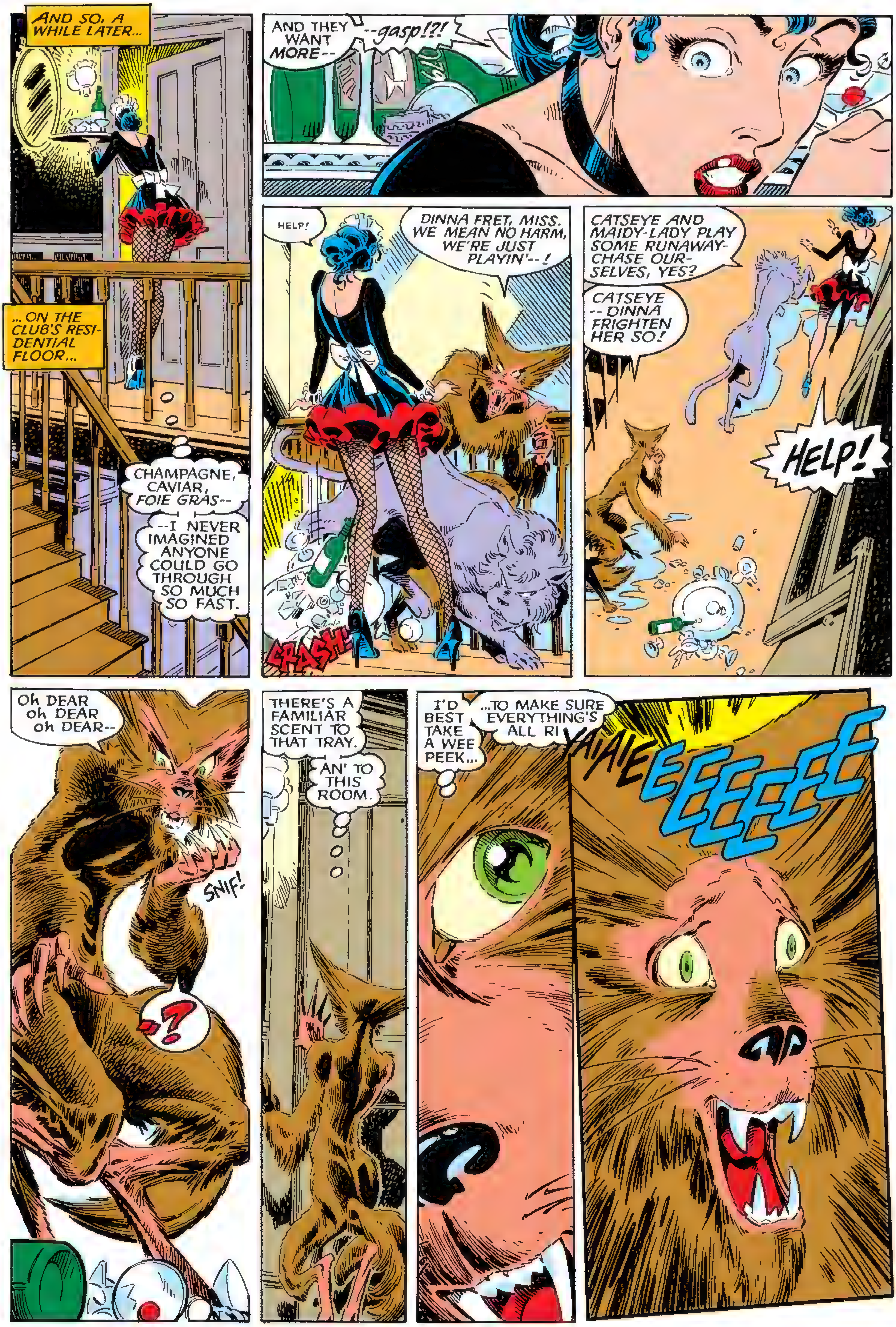

SPIRITS!?!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
I JUST GOT A FLASH OF RAHNE'S THOUGHTS!
SO?
THAT ONLY HAPPENS WHEN SHE SHIFTS INTO HER WOLF FORMS.
CATSEYE'S WITH HER--
--C'MON!
HERE ARE THEIR CLOTHES--
--BUT THE GIRLS ARE *GONE!*
LORD KNOWS WHERE THEY ARE, OR WHAT THEY'LL DO.
MISCHIEF, INCORPORATED.
WE BETTER FIND THEM FIRST.
CAN'T YOUR MIND-LINK DO THAT?!
NOT WHILE THEY REMAIN INSIDE THE CLUB.
THIS PLACE HAS BUILT-IN PSIONIC BAFFLES, REMEMBER-- TO INHIBIT ANY TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION.
WE'LL HAVE TO FOLLOW THEM THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.
FACE FACTS, CANNONBALL.
GOOD AS YOU ARE, I CAN OUTFLY YOU.
LIKE *HECK* YOU CAN!
DON'T LIKE THE WAY JETSTREAM'S LOOKIN' AT AMARA.
OR THE WAY SHE'S LOOKIN' BACK.
MAN, AH WILL *NEVER* UNDERSTAND FEMALES!
ONE WAY TO BE CERTAIN.

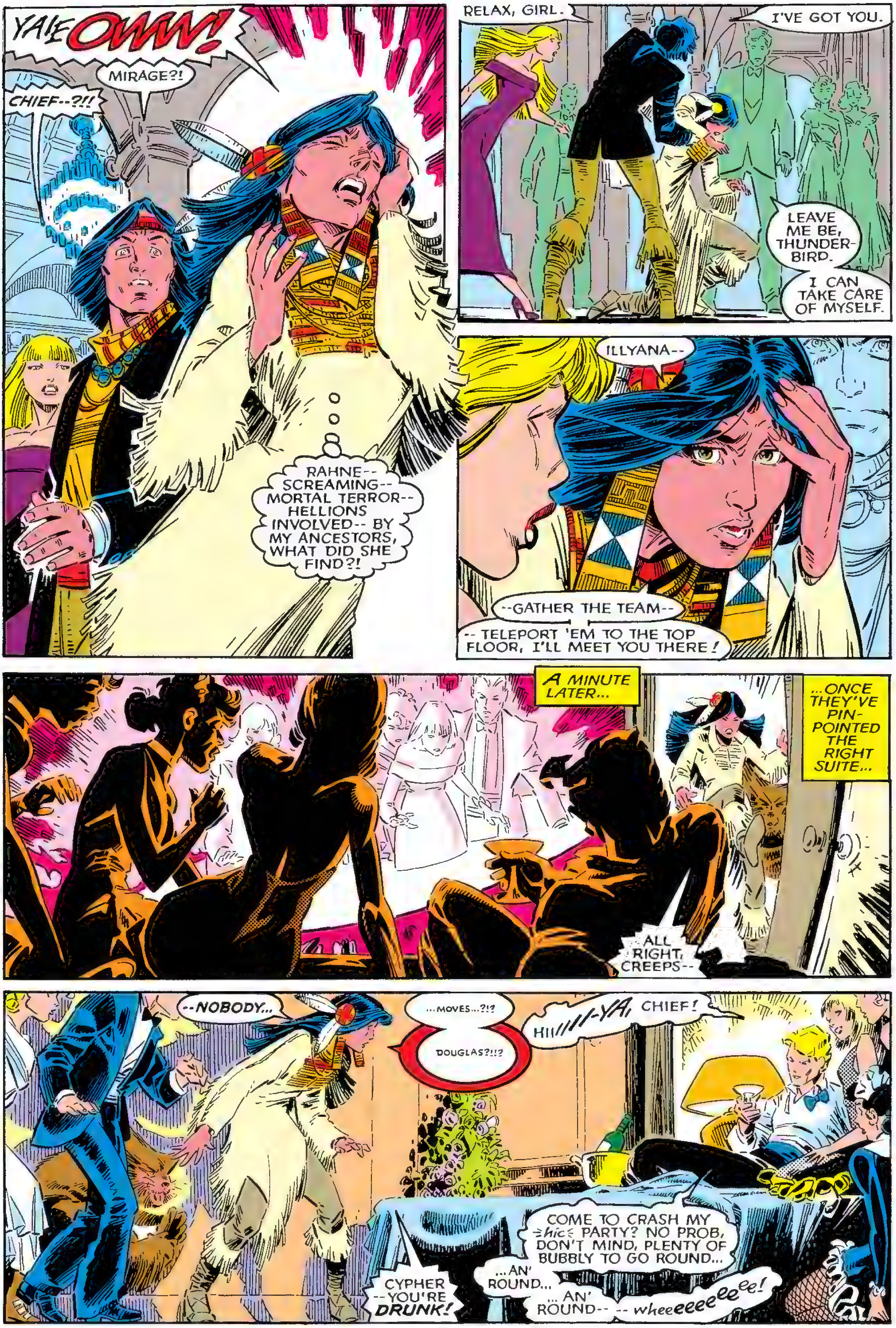

ANYTIME, ANYPLACE, PAL.
WHAT AM AH *SAYIN'?* HOW'D AH LET HIM SUCKER ME INTO A DUEL?! HOW COULD AH BE SO PRIDEFULLY *DUMB?!?*
MY LORDS AND LADIES--
--YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE.
AS A TOKEN OF FEALTY AND ESTEEM TO THE LORDS CARDINAL --AND, MOST ESPECIALLY, THE *BLACK QUEEN*--
-- I, GERHARD VAN OSTAMGEN, OFFER THIS PRICELESS STATUE...
...CRAFTED BY THE NOTED ROMAN SCULPTOR, GAIUS LUCULLUS UMBER.
YOUR PARDON, SIR, BUT I FEAR YOU'VE BEEN DECEIVED.
THE ORIGINAL HAS BEEN IN MY FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS--
-- THE REPRESENTATION OF MY GRANDMOTHER, MANY TIMES REMOVED.
HAH! THIS IS NOTHING OF THE SORT, GIRL--
--I HOLD AN IMAGE OF THE MOON GODDESS, *SELENE,* WHO BEARS THE SAME NAME AND FACE AS OUR REVERED BLACK QUEEN.
IN A SENSE, YOU ARE *BOTH* RIGHT.
IT IS SELENE *AND* AMARA'S ANCESTOR.
THOSE WOMEN ARE ONE AND THE SAME.
YOU SEE, CHILD--
--OUR LIVES, HERITAGE, AND DESTINY...
...ARE BOUND FAR MORE CLOSELY THAN EVER YOU DREAMED.
NO, YOU *LIE!* THIS CANNOT *BE!*
LADY AMARA IS CORRECT.
THIS IS A *FORGERY.*

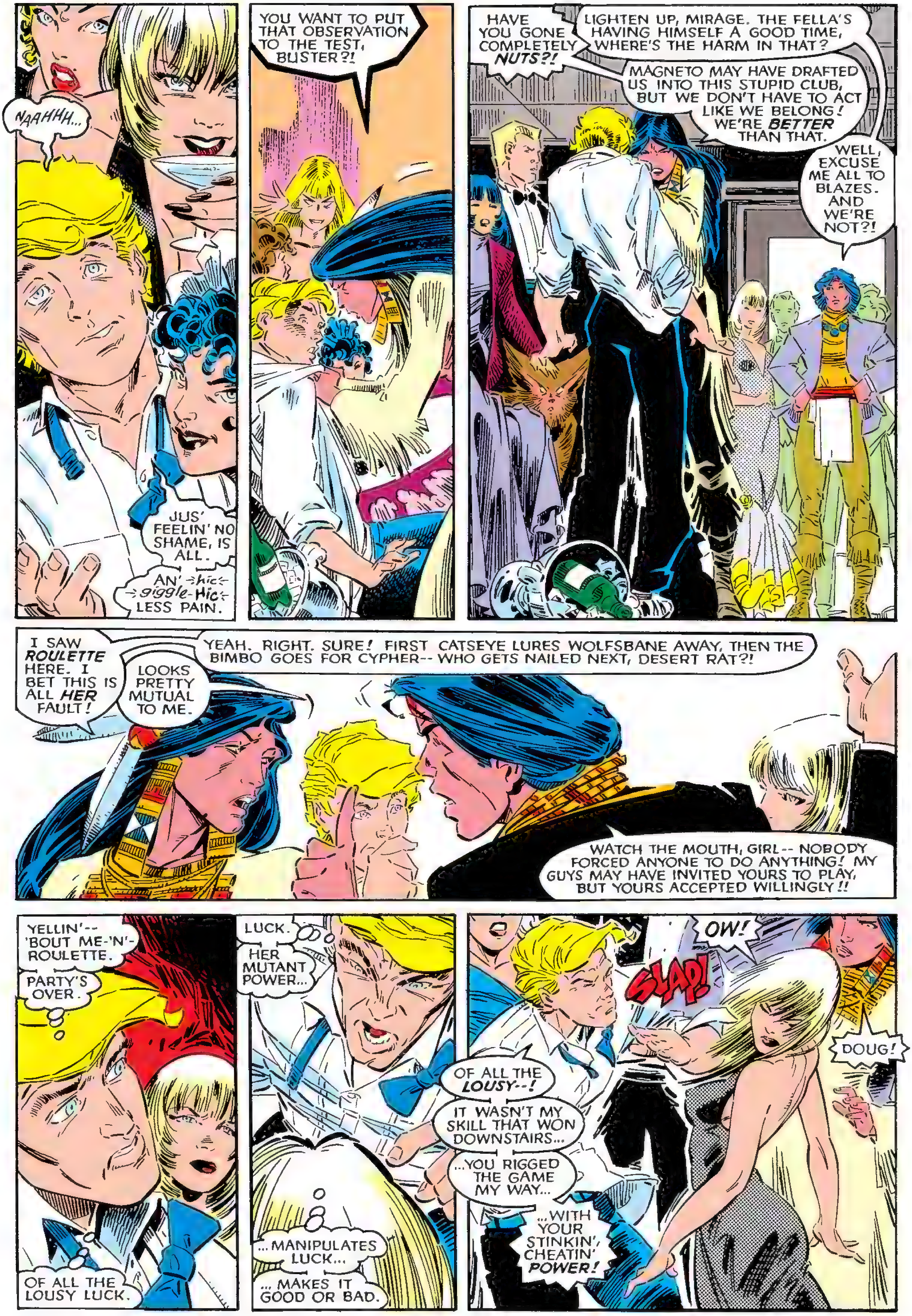

ELSEWHERE-- IN A DRAWING ROOM-CUM-CASINO...
YOU'RE DOUG.
AND YOU'RE JENNY STAVROS.
YOU REMEMBER-- NEAT!
I PREFER ROULETTE.
LIKE YOUR DRESS.
MY KIND'A OUTFIT.
MY KIND'A PLACE.
MY KIND'A PEOPLE.
WISH I FELT THE SAME.
YOU A GEEK THEN, CYPHER...
...OR A PLAYER?
ME, I GO FOR PLAYERS.
DEAL ME IN, PLEASE.
THIS IS HIGH-STAKES POKER, BOY.
I'M NOT A BOY, MISTER.
I'LL STAKE YOU, LOVER.
GO FOR BROKE!
ELSEWHERE AGAIN...
...IN CATACOMBS FAR BENEATH THE CLUB...
...KNOWN ONLY TO THE LORDS CARDINAL AND THEIR SUBORDINATES IN THE INNER CIRCLE...
...ALARMS HAVE ROUSED THE GUARD.
INTRUDER ALERT!
SET SCANNERS TO FULL STRENGTH--WE'VE GOT TO LOCATE THEM, FAST!

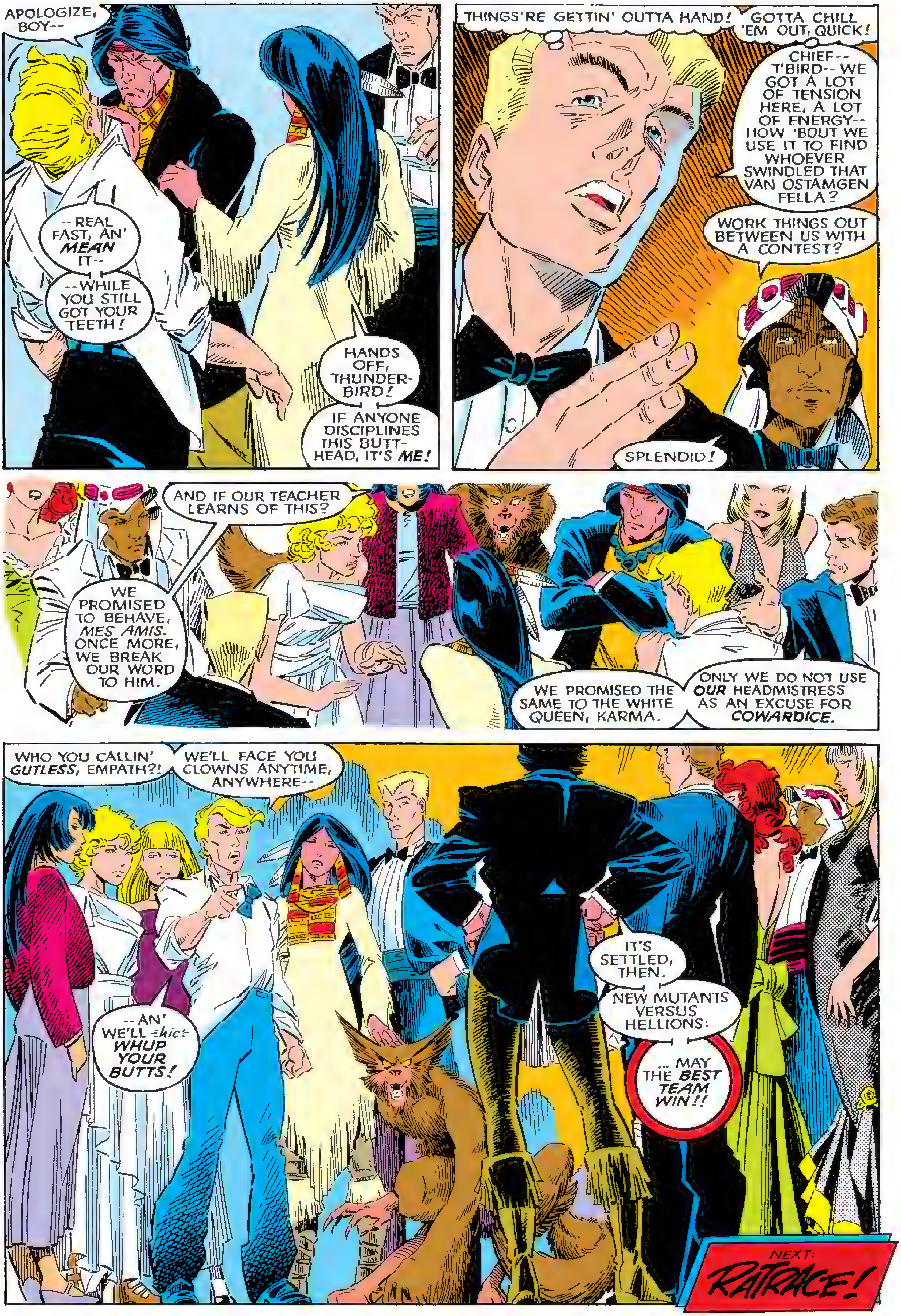

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS TRAIL?
AREN'T YOU?
I THOUGHT THE APACHE WERE REAL HOTSHOT TRACKERS.
FREEZE!
AFTER A BRIEF, SLIGHTLY FRANTIC EXPLANATION...
WE'VE SCANNED THE ENTIRE COMPLEX AND YOU'RE THE ONLY TRESPASSERS.
THIS AREA'S OFF-LIMITS TO YOU BRATS.
MAKE YOURSELVES SCARCE--AND DON'T COME BACK!
NOW WHAT?
WE LOOK HARDER.
MEANWHILE, UPSTAIRS...
ONLY ME AND THE BIG GUY LEFT.
PLAYING FOR A FORTUNE!


YOU LOOK NERVOUS, BOY.
IN OVER YOUR HEAD, MEBBE?
YOU CAN ALWAYS QUIT.
I RAISE.
MATCH ME OR FOLD.
MY POWER HELPS ME "READ" BODY LANGUAGE...
...SAME AS I DO WRITTEN WORDS OR SPEECH.
HE'S SURE HE'S GOT ME BEAT.
I CALL.
FOUR NINES.
READ 'EM AN' WEEP.
NOT TONIGHT, THANKS.
WHATTA GUY--
--MY HERO!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- I BEAT HIM, BY MYSELF, WITH STRATEGY AND SKILL!!
YOU SURE DID, LOVER!
NOW IT'S TIME TO PARTY!!!


AND SO, A WHILE LATER...
...ON THE CLUB'S RESIDENTIAL FLOOR...
CHAMPAGNE, CAVIAR, FOIE GRAS--
--I NEVER IMAGINED ANYONE COULD GO THROUGH SO MUCH SO FAST.
AND THEY WANT MORE--
--gasp!?!
HELP!
DINNA FRET, MISS. WE MEAN NO HARM, WE'RE JUST PLAYIN'--!
CRASH!
CATSEYE AND MAIDY-LADY PLAY SOME RUNAWAY-CHASE OURSELVES, YES?
CATSEYE -- DINNA FRIGHTEN HER SO!
HELP!
Oh DEAR oh DEAR oh DEAR--
SNIF!
?
THERE'S A FAMILIAR SCENT TO THAT TRAY.
AN' TO THIS ROOM.
I'D BEST TAKE A WEE PEEK...
...TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING'S ALL RI
YAIAIEEEEEEEE


YAIEOWW!
MIRAGE?!
CHIEF--?!!
RAHNE-- SCREAMING-- MORTAL TERROR-- HELLIONS INVOLVED-- BY MY ANCESTORS, WHAT DID SHE FIND?!
RELAX, GIRL.
I'VE GOT YOU.
LEAVE ME BE, THUNDERBIRD.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
ILLYANA--
--GATHER THE TEAM--
-- TELEPORT 'EM TO THE TOP FLOOR, I'LL MEET YOU THERE!
A MINUTE LATER...
...ONCE THEY'VE PIN-POINTED THE RIGHT SUITE...
ALL RIGHT, CREEPS--
--NOBODY...
...MOVES...?!?
DOUGLAS?!!?
HIIIII-YA, CHIEF!
COME TO CRASH MY *hic* PARTY? NO PROB, DON'T MIND, PLENTY OF BUBBLY TO GO ROUND...
CYPHER --YOU'RE DRUNK!
...AN' ROUND...
... AN' ROUND--
-- wheeeeeeeeee!


NAAHHH...
JUS' FEELIN' NO SHAME, IS ALL.
AN' ≠hic≠ ≠giggle-Hic≠ LESS PAIN.
YOU WANT TO PUT THAT OBSERVATION TO THE TEST, BUSTER?!
HAVE YOU GONE COMPLETELY *NUTS?!*
LIGHTEN UP, MIRAGE. THE FELLA'S HAVING HIMSELF A GOOD TIME, WHERE'S THE HARM IN THAT?
MAGNETO MAY HAVE DRAFTED US INTO THIS STUPID CLUB, BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO ACT LIKE WE BELONG! WE'RE *BETTER* THAN THAT.
WELL, EXCUSE ME ALL TO BLAZES. AND WE'RE NOT?!
I SAW *ROULETTE* HERE. I BET THIS IS ALL *HER* FAULT!
LOOKS PRETTY MUTUAL TO ME.
YEAH. RIGHT. SURE! FIRST CATSEYE LURES WOLFSBANE AWAY, THEN THE BIMBO GOES FOR CYPHER-- WHO GETS NAILED NEXT, DESERT RAT?!
WATCH THE MOUTH, GIRL-- NOBODY FORCED ANYONE TO DO ANYTHING! MY GUYS MAY HAVE INVITED YOURS TO PLAY, BUT YOURS ACCEPTED WILLINGLY!!
YELLIN'-- 'BOUT ME-'N'-ROULETTE.
PARTY'S OVER.
OF ALL THE LOUSY LUCK.
LUCK.
HER MUTANT POWER...
...MANIPULATES LUCK...
...MAKES IT GOOD OR BAD.
OF ALL THE *LOUSY--!*
IT WASN'T MY SKILL THAT WON DOWNSTAIRS...
...YOU RIGGED THE GAME MY WAY...
...WITH YOUR STINKIN', CHEATIN' *POWER!*
SLAP!
OW!
DOUG!


APOLOGIZE, BOY--
--REAL FAST, AN' *MEAN* IT--
--WHILE YOU STILL GOT YOUR TEETH!
HANDS OFF, THUNDERBIRD!
IF ANYONE DISCIPLINES THIS BUTT-HEAD, IT'S *ME!*
THINGS'RE GETTIN' OUTTA HAND! GOTTA CHILL 'EM OUT, QUICK!
CHIEF-- T'BIRD-- WE GOT A LOT OF TENSION HERE, A LOT OF ENERGY-- HOW 'BOUT WE USE IT TO FIND WHOEVER SWINDLED THAT VAN OSTAMGEN FELLA?
WORK THINGS OUT BETWEEN US WITH A CONTEST?
SPLENDID!
AND IF OUR TEACHER LEARNS OF THIS?
WE PROMISED TO BEHAVE, *MES AMIS.* ONCE MORE, WE BREAK OUR WORD TO HIM.
WE PROMISED THE SAME TO THE WHITE QUEEN, KARMA.
ONLY WE DO NOT USE *OUR* HEADMISTRESS AS AN EXCUSE FOR *COWARDICE.*
WHO YOU CALLIN' *GUTLESS,* EMPATH?!
WE'LL FACE YOU CLOWNS ANYTIME, ANYWHERE--
--AN' WE'LL *=hic=* *WHUP YOUR BUTTS!*
IT'S SETTLED, THEN.
NEW MUTANTS VERSUS HELLIONS:
... MAY THE *BEST TEAM* WIN!!
NEXT: RATRACE!

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THE • NEW MUTANTS®

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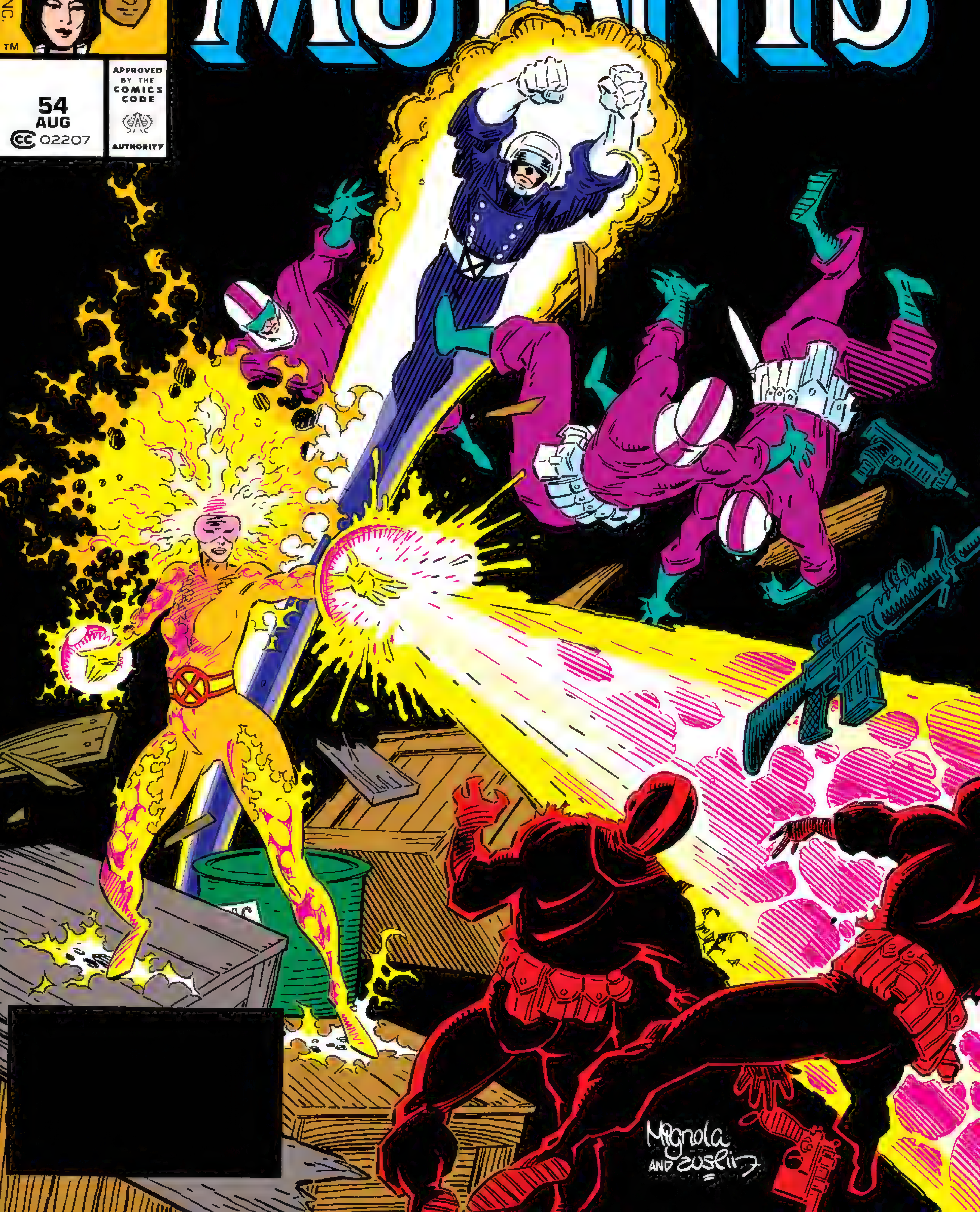
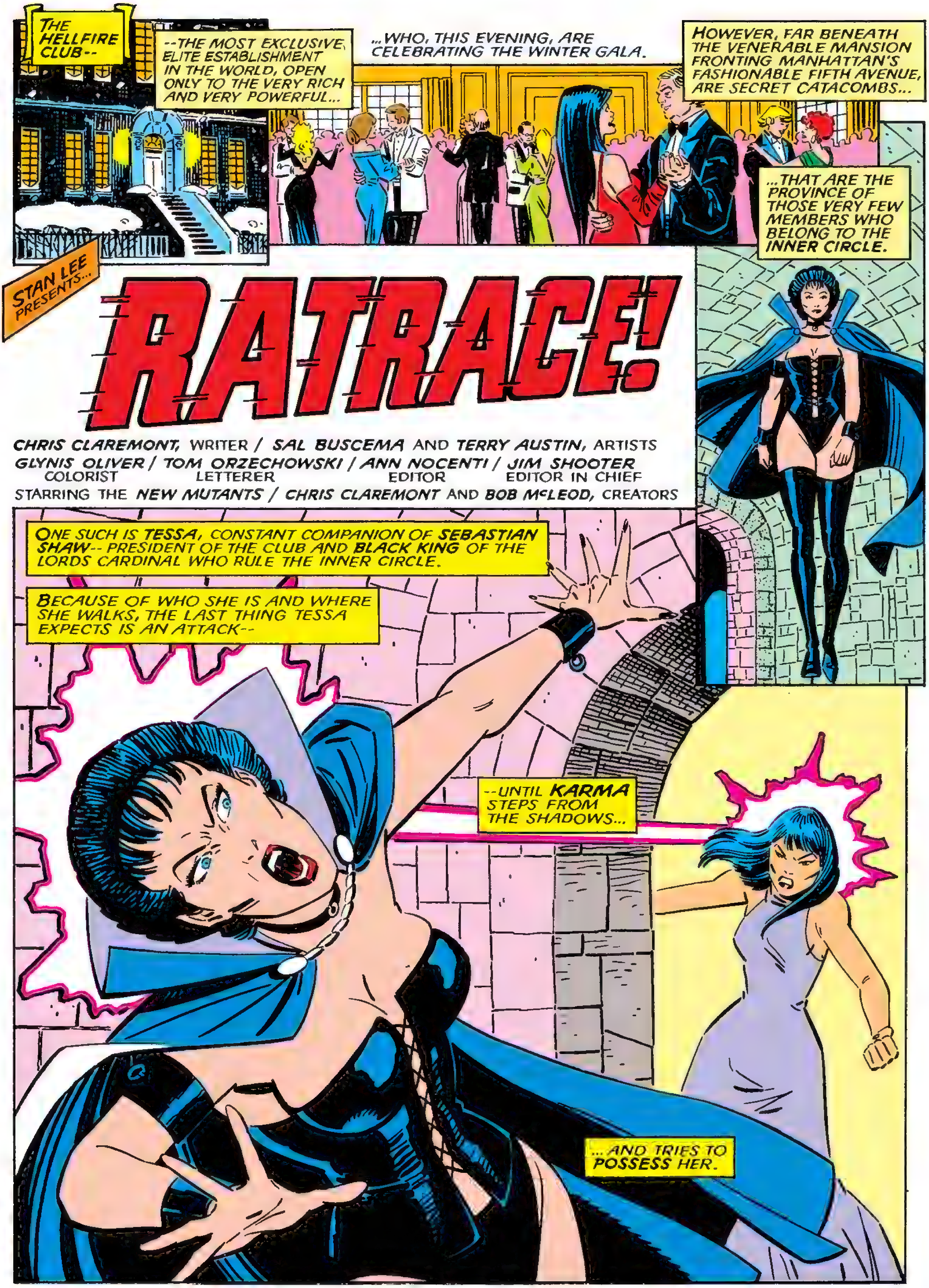

Mignola
AND Austin


THE HELLFIRE CLUB--
--THE MOST EXCLUSIVE ELITE ESTABLISHMENT IN THE WORLD, OPEN ONLY TO THE VERY RICH AND VERY POWERFUL...
...WHO, THIS EVENING, ARE CELEBRATING THE WINTER GALA.
HOWEVER, FAR BENEATH THE VENERABLE MANSION FRONTING MANHATTAN'S FASHIONABLE FIFTH AVENUE, ARE SECRET CATACOMBS...
...THAT ARE THE PROVINCE OF THOSE VERY FEW MEMBERS WHO BELONG TO THE INNER CIRCLE.
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
RATRACE!
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER / SAL BUSCEMA AND TERRY AUSTIN, ARTISTS
GLYNIS OLIVER / TOM ORZECHOWSKI / ANN NOCENTI / JIM SHOOTER
COLORIST LETTERER EDITOR EDITOR IN CHIEF
STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS / CHRIS CLAREMONT AND BOB McLEOD, CREATORS
ONE SUCH IS TESSA, CONSTANT COMPANION OF SEBASTIAN SHAW-- PRESIDENT OF THE CLUB AND BLACK KING OF THE LORDS CARDINAL WHO RULE THE INNER CIRCLE.
BECAUSE OF WHO SHE IS AND WHERE SHE WALKS, THE LAST THING TESSA EXPECTS IS AN ATTACK--
--UNTIL KARMA STEPS FROM THE SHADOWS...
...AND TRIES TO POSSESS HER.

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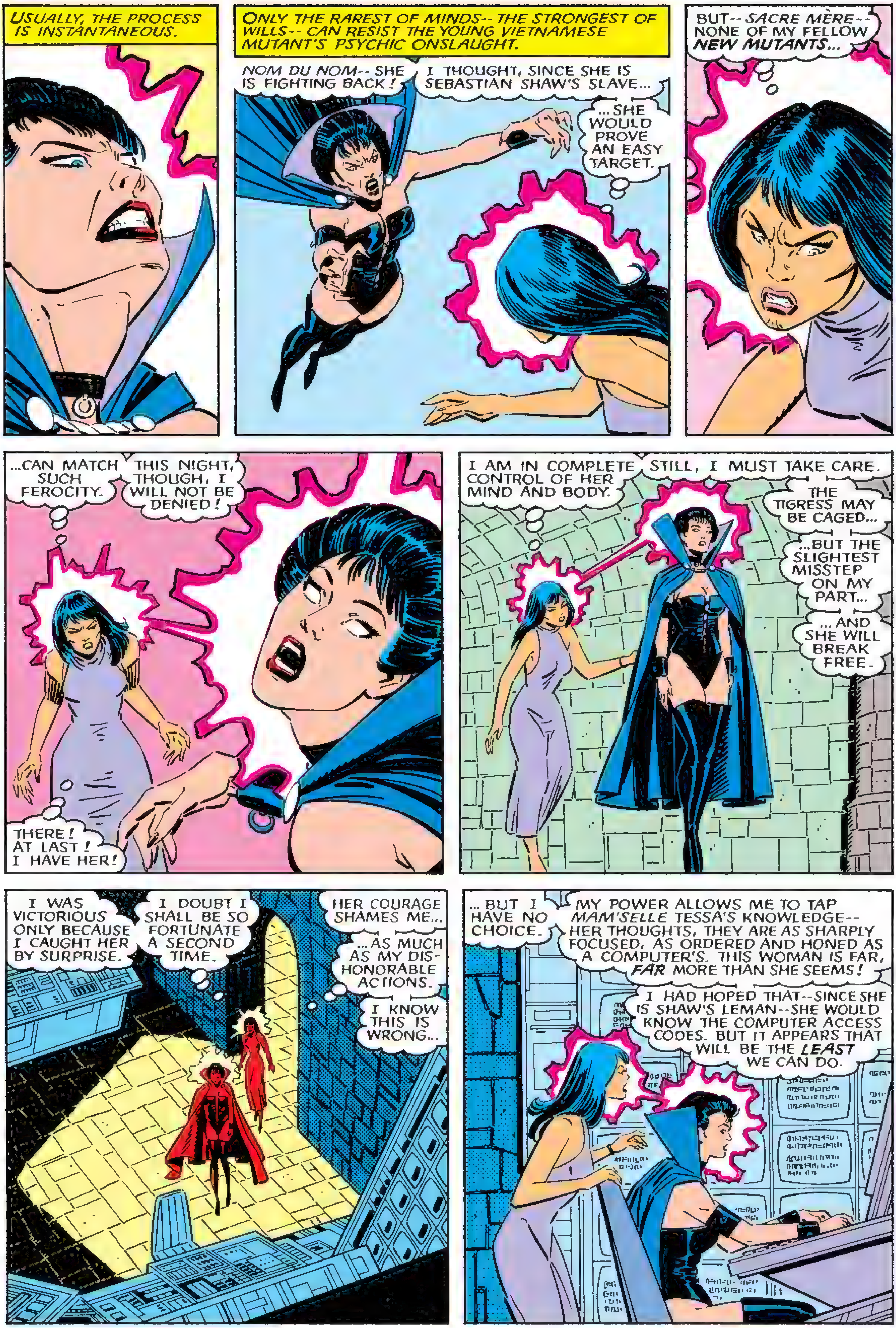
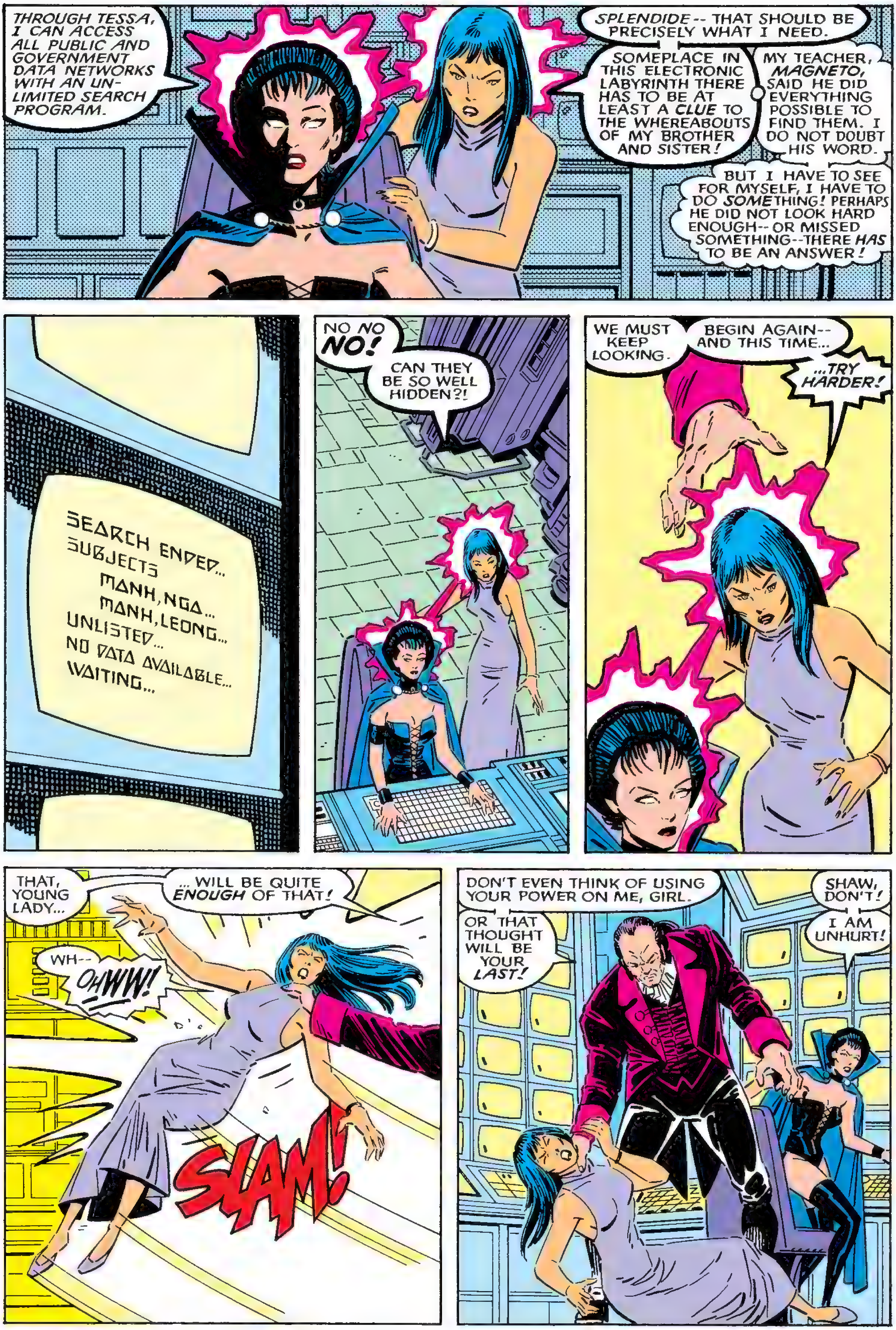
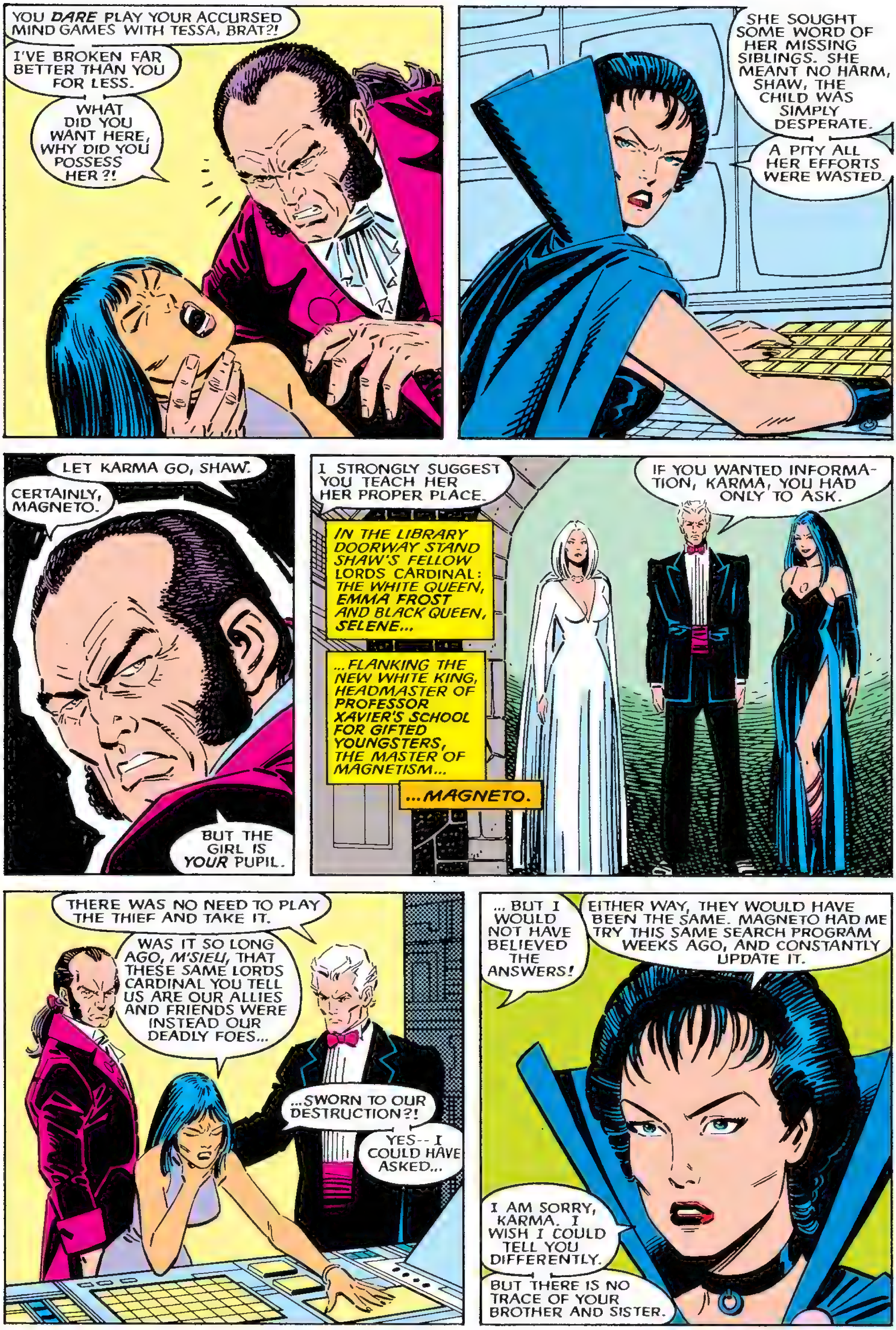
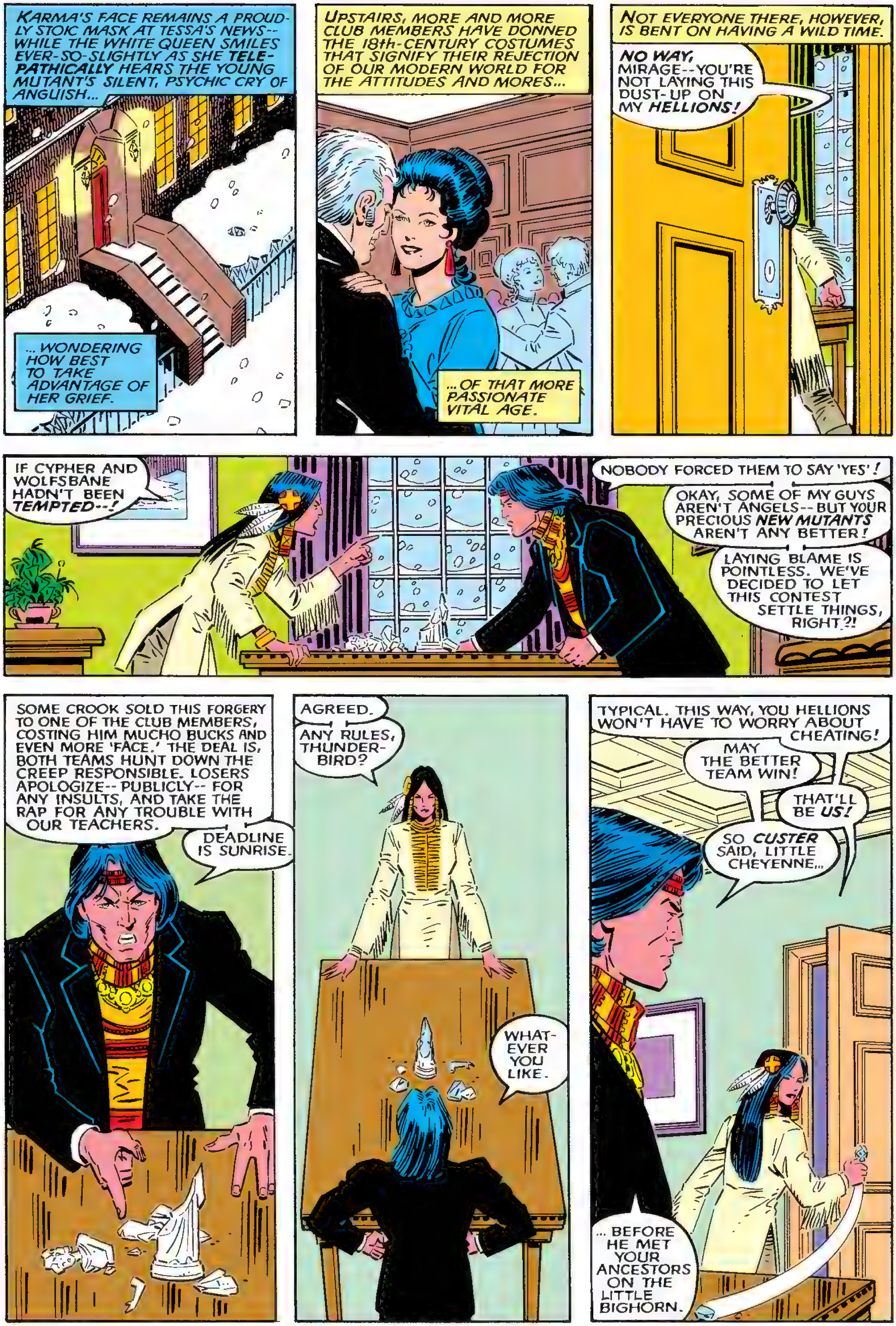
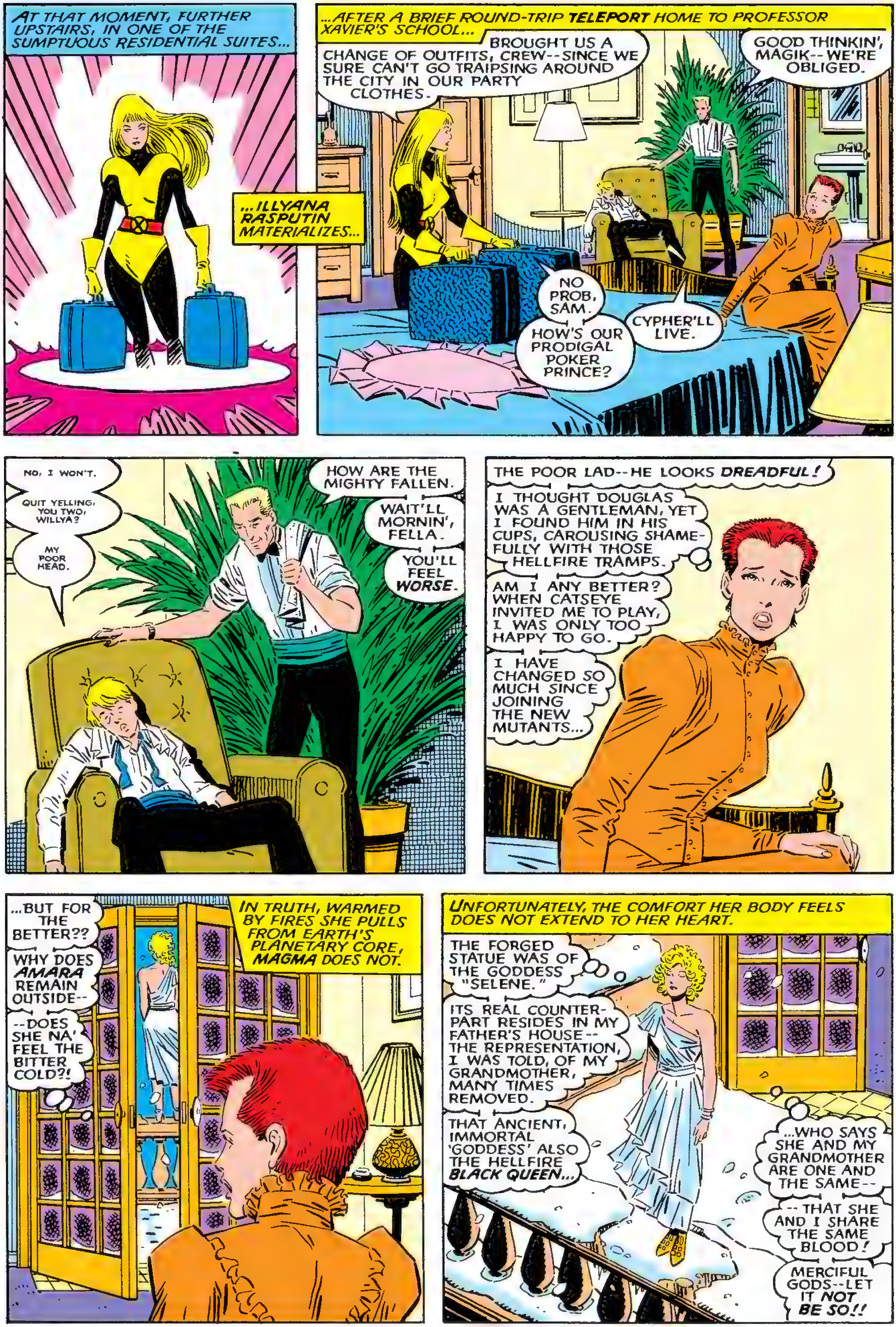
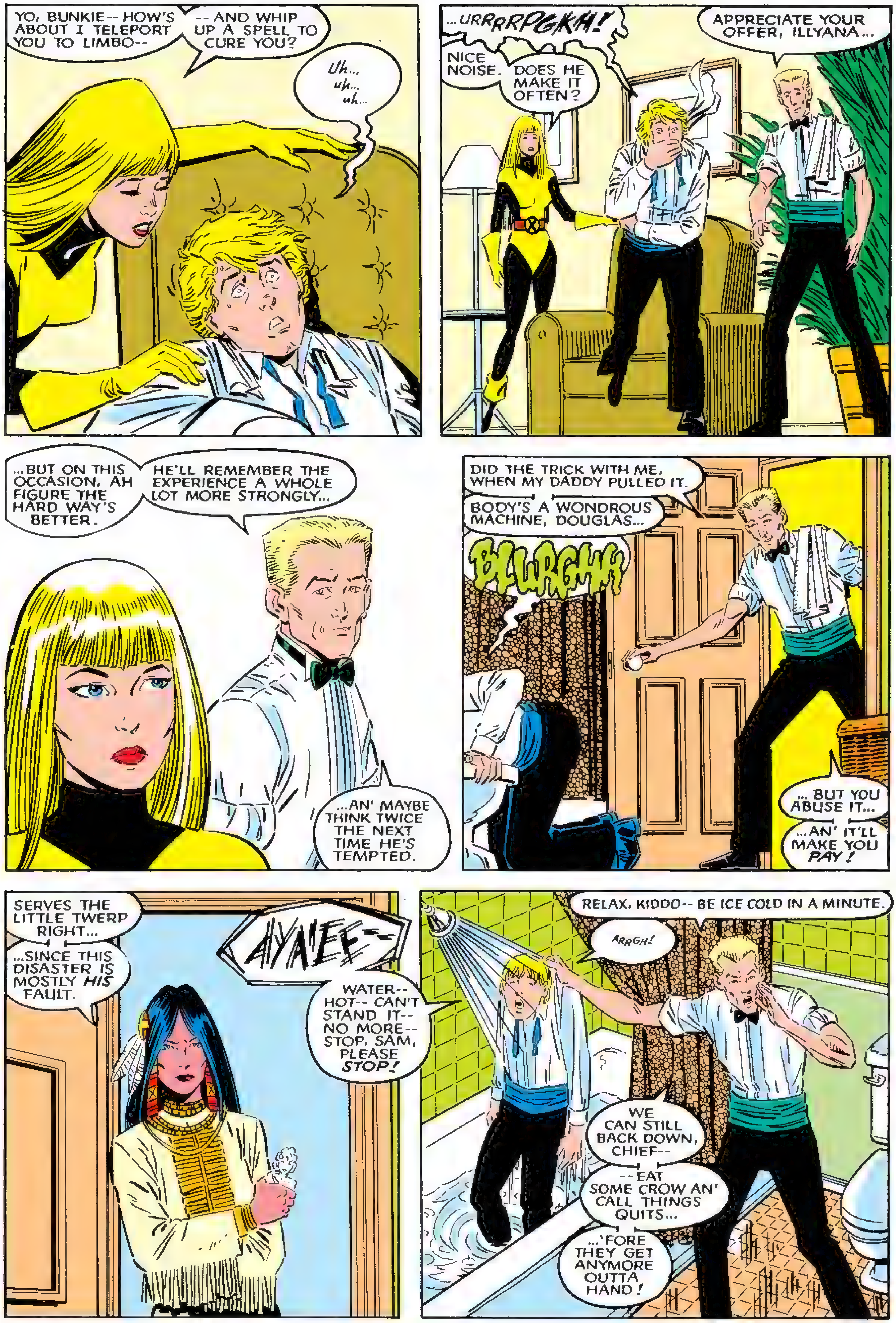

USUALLY, THE PROCESS IS INSTANTANEOUS.
ONLY THE RAREST OF MINDS-- THE STRONGEST OF WILLS-- CAN RESIST THE YOUNG VIETNAMESE MUTANT'S PSYCHIC ONSLAUGHT.
NOM DU NOM-- SHE IS FIGHTING BACK!
I THOUGHT, SINCE SHE IS SEBASTIAN SHAW'S SLAVE...
...SHE WOULD PROVE AN EASY TARGET.
BUT-- SACRE MÈRE-- NONE OF MY FELLOW NEW MUTANTS...
...CAN MATCH SUCH FEROCITY.
THIS NIGHT, THOUGH, I WILL NOT BE DENIED!
THERE! AT LAST! I HAVE HER!
I AM IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF HER MIND AND BODY.
STILL, I MUST TAKE CARE.
THE TIGRESS MAY BE CAGED...
...BUT THE SLIGHTEST MISSTEP ON MY PART...
...AND SHE WILL BREAK FREE.
I WAS VICTORIOUS ONLY BECAUSE I CAUGHT HER BY SURPRISE.
I DOUBT I SHALL BE SO FORTUNATE A SECOND TIME.
HER COURAGE SHAMES ME...
...AS MUCH AS MY DISHONORABLE ACTIONS.
I KNOW THIS IS WRONG...
...BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE.
MY POWER ALLOWS ME TO TAP MAM'SELLE TESSA'S KNOWLEDGE-- HER THOUGHTS, THEY ARE AS SHARPLY FOCUSED, AS ORDERED AND HONED AS A COMPUTER'S. THIS WOMAN IS FAR, FAR MORE THAN SHE SEEMS!
I HAD HOPED THAT--SINCE SHE IS SHAW'S LEMAN--SHE WOULD KNOW THE COMPUTER ACCESS CODES. BUT IT APPEARS THAT WILL BE THE LEAST WE CAN DO.

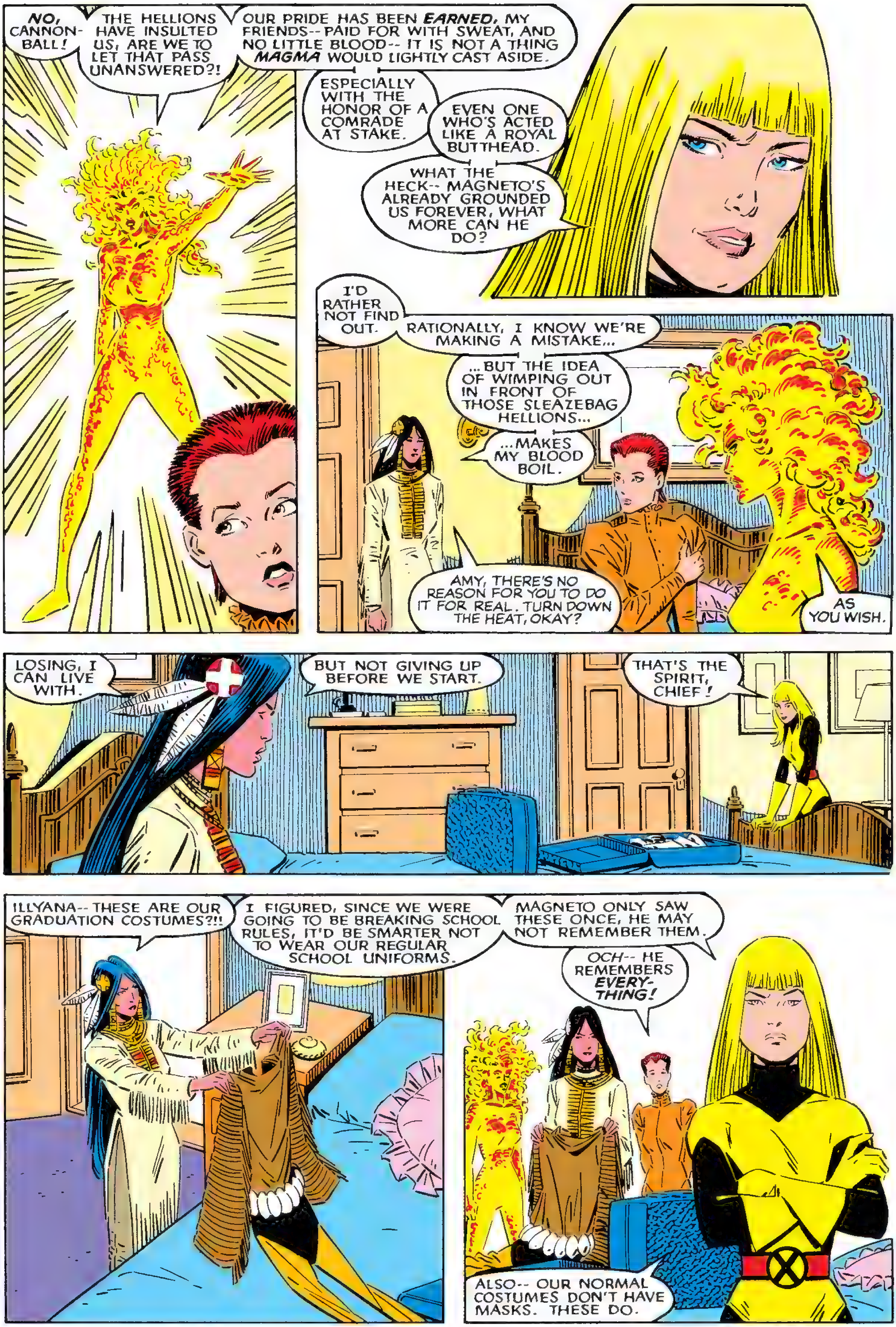

THROUGH TESSA, I CAN ACCESS ALL PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT DATA NETWORKS WITH AN UNLIMITED SEARCH PROGRAM.
SPLENDIDE-- THAT SHOULD BE PRECISELY WHAT I NEED.
SOMEPLACE IN THIS ELECTRONIC LABYRINTH THERE HAS TO BE AT LEAST A CLUE TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF MY BROTHER AND SISTER!
MY TEACHER, MAGNETO, SAID HE DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FIND THEM. I DO NOT DOUBT HIS WORD.
BUT I HAVE TO SEE FOR MYSELF, I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING! PERHAPS HE DID NOT LOOK HARD ENOUGH-- OR MISSED SOMETHING--THERE HAS TO BE AN ANSWER!
SEARCH ENDED...
SUBJECTS
MANH, NGA...
MANH, LEONG...
UNLISTED...
NO DATA AVAILABLE...
WAITING...
NO NO NO!
CAN THEY BE SO WELL HIDDEN?!
WE MUST KEEP LOOKING.
BEGIN AGAIN-- AND THIS TIME...
...TRY HARDER!
THAT, YOUNG LADY...
...WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH OF THAT!
WH--
OHWW!
SLAM!
DON'T EVEN THINK OF USING YOUR POWER ON ME, GIRL.
OR THAT THOUGHT WILL BE YOUR LAST!
SHAW, DON'T!
I AM UNHURT!

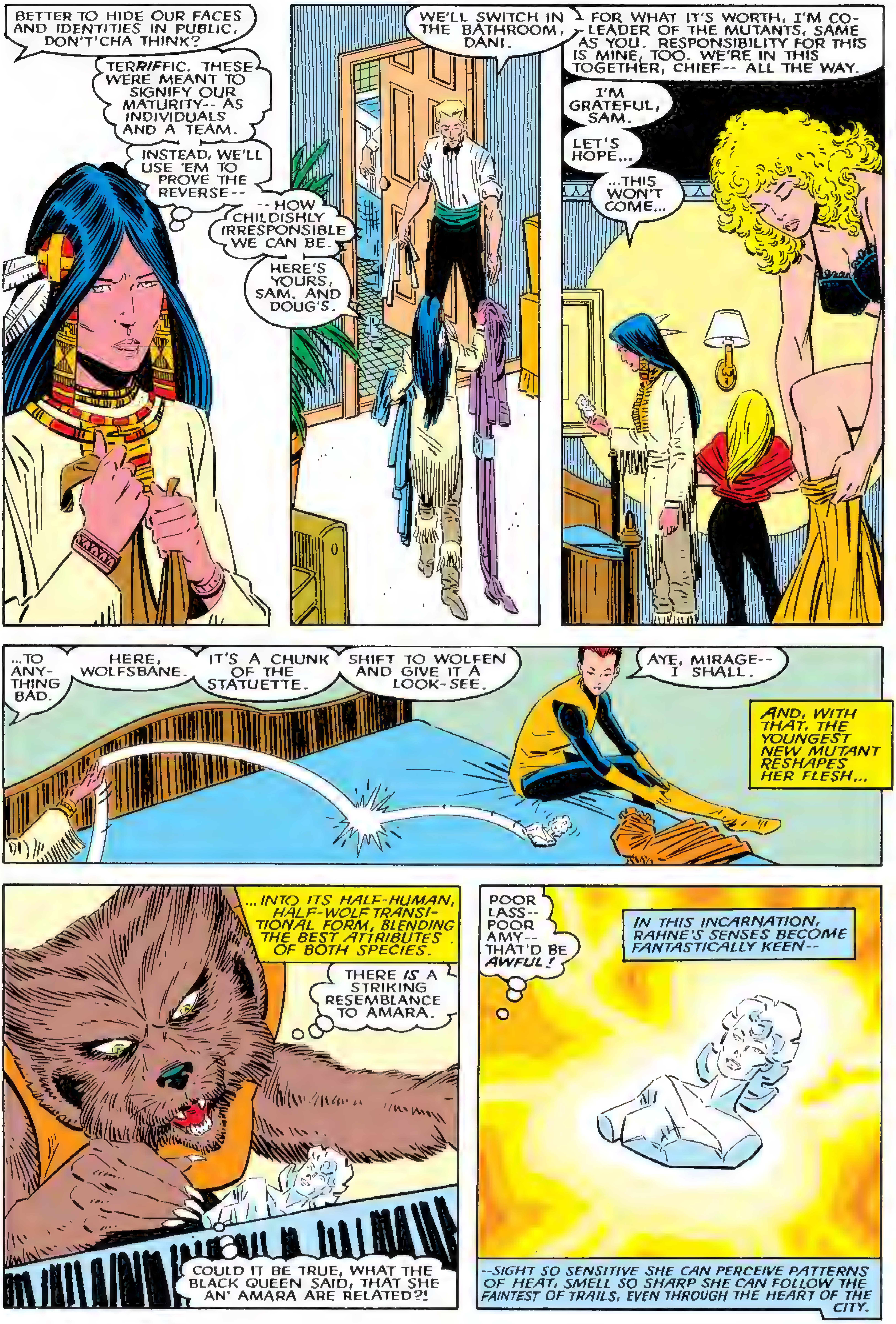

YOU *DARE* PLAY YOUR ACCURSED MIND GAMES WITH TESSA, BRAT?!
I'VE BROKEN FAR BETTER THAN YOU FOR LESS.
WHAT DID YOU WANT HERE, WHY DID YOU POSSESS HER?!
SHE SOUGHT SOME WORD OF HER MISSING SIBLINGS. SHE MEANT NO HARM, SHAW. THE CHILD WAS SIMPLY DESPERATE.
A PITY ALL HER EFFORTS WERE WASTED.
LET KARMA GO, SHAW.
CERTAINLY, MAGNETO.
BUT THE GIRL IS *YOUR* PUPIL.
I STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU TEACH HER HER PROPER PLACE.
IN THE LIBRARY DOORWAY STAND SHAW'S FELLOW LORDS CARDINAL: THE WHITE QUEEN, EMMA FROST AND BLACK QUEEN, SELENE...
...FLANKING THE NEW WHITE KING, HEADMASTER OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS, THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM...
...MAGNETO.
IF YOU WANTED INFORMATION, KARMA, YOU HAD ONLY TO ASK.
THERE WAS NO NEED TO PLAY THE THIEF AND TAKE IT.
WAS IT SO LONG AGO, *M'SIEU*, THAT THESE SAME LORDS CARDINAL YOU TELL US ARE OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS WERE INSTEAD OUR DEADLY FOES...
...SWORN TO OUR DESTRUCTION?!
YES-- I COULD HAVE ASKED...
... BUT I WOULD NOT HAVE BELIEVED THE ANSWERS!
EITHER WAY, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME. MAGNETO HAD ME TRY THIS SAME SEARCH PROGRAM WEEKS AGO, AND CONSTANTLY UPDATE IT.
I AM SORRY, KARMA. I WISH I COULD TELL YOU DIFFERENTLY.
BUT THERE IS NO TRACE OF YOUR BROTHER AND SISTER.

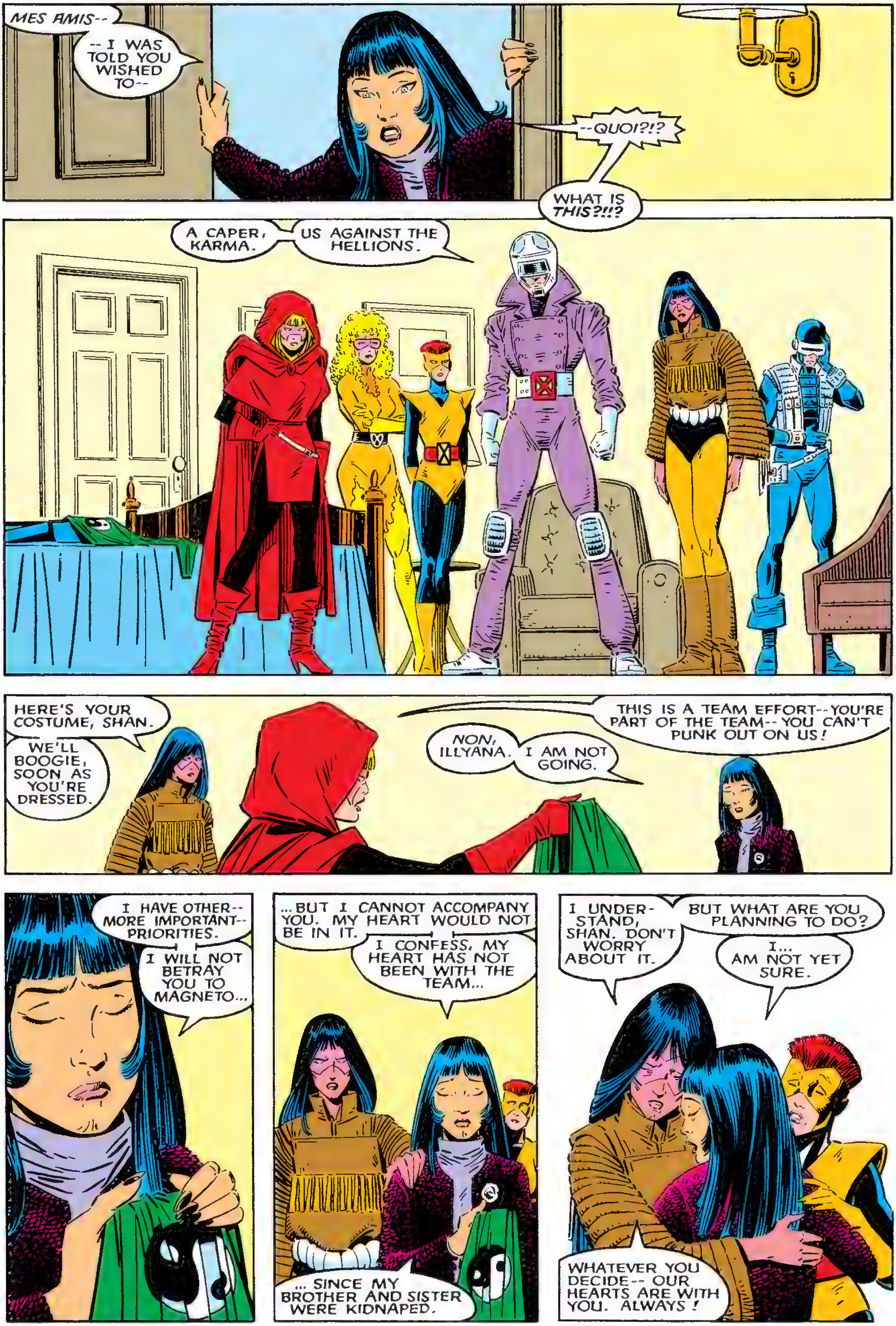

KARMA'S FACE REMAINS A PROUDLY STOIC MASK AT TESSA'S NEWS-- WHILE THE WHITE QUEEN SMILES EVER-SO-SLIGHTLY AS SHE **TELEPATHICALLY** HEARS THE YOUNG MUTANT'S SILENT, PSYCHIC CRY OF ANGUISH...
...WONDERING HOW BEST TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER GRIEF.
UPSTAIRS, MORE AND MORE CLUB MEMBERS HAVE DONNED THE 18th-CENTURY COSTUMES THAT SIGNIFY THEIR REJECTION OF OUR MODERN WORLD FOR THE ATTITUDES AND MORES...
...OF THAT MORE PASSIONATE VITAL AGE.
NOT EVERYONE THERE, HOWEVER, IS BENT ON HAVING A WILD TIME.
NO WAY, MIRAGE--YOU'RE NOT LAYING THIS DUST-UP ON MY **HELLIONS!**
IF CYPHER AND WOLFSBANE HADN'T BEEN **TEMPTED**--!
NOBODY FORCED THEM TO SAY 'YES'!
OKAY, SOME OF MY GUYS AREN'T ANGELS--BUT YOUR PRECIOUS **NEW MUTANTS** AREN'T ANY BETTER!
LAYING BLAME IS POINTLESS. WE'VE DECIDED TO LET THIS CONTEST SETTLE THINGS, RIGHT?!
SOME CROOK SOLD THIS FORGERY TO ONE OF THE CLUB MEMBERS, COSTING HIM MUCHO BUCKS AND EVEN MORE 'FACE.' THE DEAL IS, BOTH TEAMS HUNT DOWN THE CREEP RESPONSIBLE. LOSERS APOLOGIZE-- PUBLICLY-- FOR ANY INSULTS, AND TAKE THE RAP FOR ANY TROUBLE WITH OUR TEACHERS.
DEADLINE IS SUNRISE.
AGREED.
ANY RULES, THUNDERBIRD?
WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
TYPICAL. THIS WAY, YOU HELLIONS WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CHEATING!
MAY THE BETTER TEAM WIN!
THAT'LL BE **US!**
SO **CUSTER** SAID, LITTLE CHEYENNE...
...BEFORE HE MET YOUR ANCESTORS ON THE LITTLE BIGHORN.

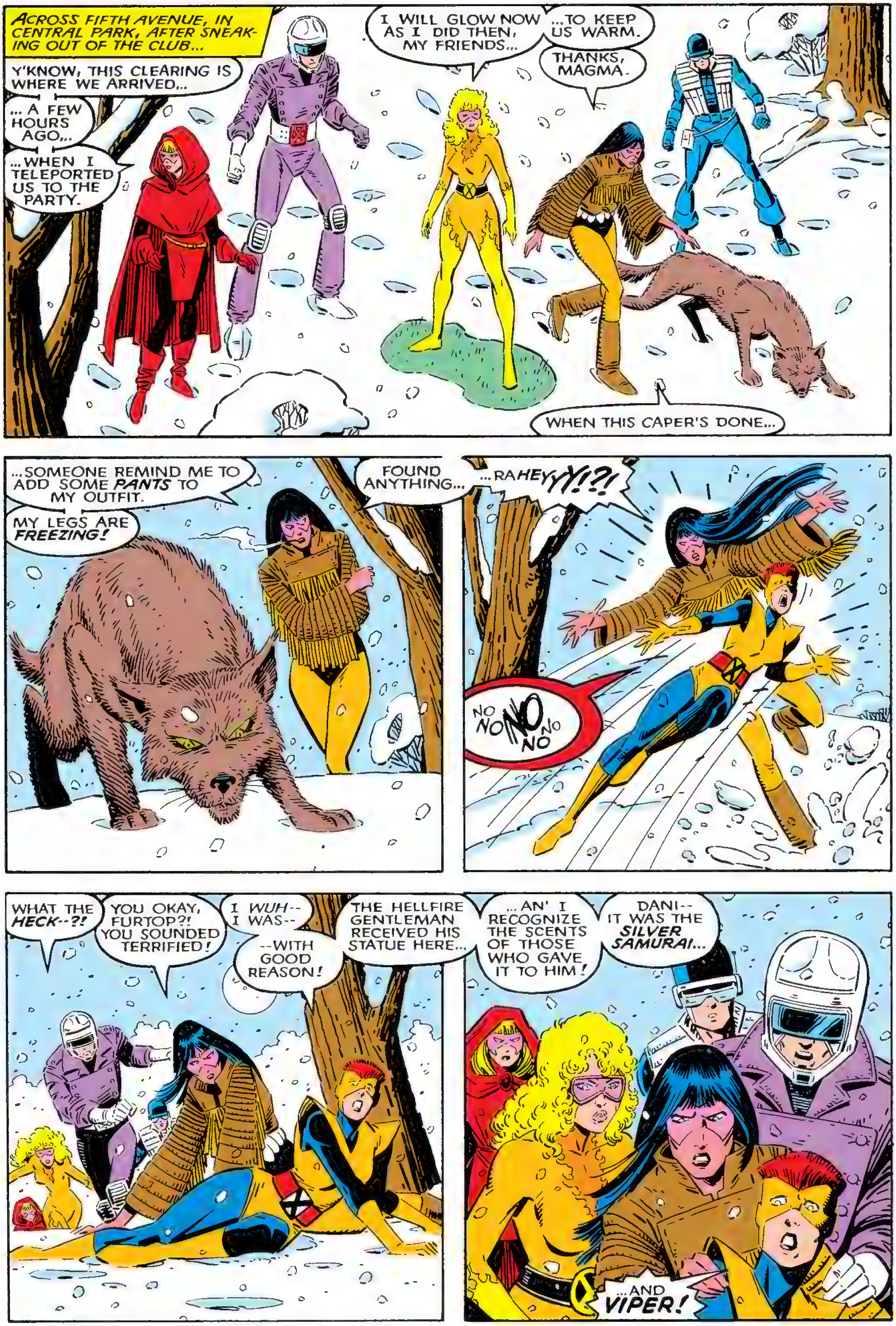

AT THAT MOMENT, FURTHER UPSTAIRS, IN ONE OF THE SUMPTUOUS RESIDENTIAL SUITES...
...ILLYANA RASPUTIN MATERIALIZES...
...AFTER A BRIEF ROUND-TRIP TELEPORT HOME TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL...
BROUGHT US A CHANGE OF OUTFITS, CREW--SINCE WE SURE CAN'T GO TRAIPSING AROUND THE CITY IN OUR PARTY CLOTHES.
GOOD THINKIN', MAGIK--WE'RE OBLIGED.
NO PROB, SAM.
HOW'S OUR PRODIGAL POKER PRINCE?
CYPHER'LL LIVE.
NO, I WON'T.
QUIT YELLING, YOU TWO, WILLYA?
MY POOR HEAD.
HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN.
WAIT'LL MORNIN', FELLA.
YOU'LL FEEL WORSE.
THE POOR LAD--HE LOOKS DREADFUL!
I THOUGHT DOUGLAS WAS A GENTLEMAN, YET I FOUND HIM IN HIS CUPS, CAROUSING SHAMEFULLY WITH THOSE HELLFIRE TRAMPS.
AM I ANY BETTER? WHEN CATSEYE INVITED ME TO PLAY, I WAS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO GO.
I HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH SINCE JOINING THE NEW MUTANTS...
...BUT FOR THE BETTER??
WHY DOES AMARA REMAIN OUTSIDE--
--DOES SHE NA' FEEL THE BITTER COLD?!
IN TRUTH, WARMED BY FIRES SHE PULLS FROM EARTH'S PLANETARY CORE, MAGMA DOES NOT.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE COMFORT HER BODY FEELS DOES NOT EXTEND TO HER HEART.
THE FORGED STATUE WAS OF THE GODDESS "SELENE."
ITS REAL COUNTERPART RESIDES IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE--THE REPRESENTATION, I WAS TOLD, OF MY GRANDMOTHER, MANY TIMES REMOVED.
THAT ANCIENT, IMMORTAL 'GODDESS' ALSO THE HELLFIRE BLACK QUEEN...
...WHO SAYS SHE AND MY GRANDMOTHER ARE ONE AND THE SAME--
--THAT SHE AND I SHARE THE SAME BLOOD!
MERCIFUL GODS--LET IT NOT BE SO!!

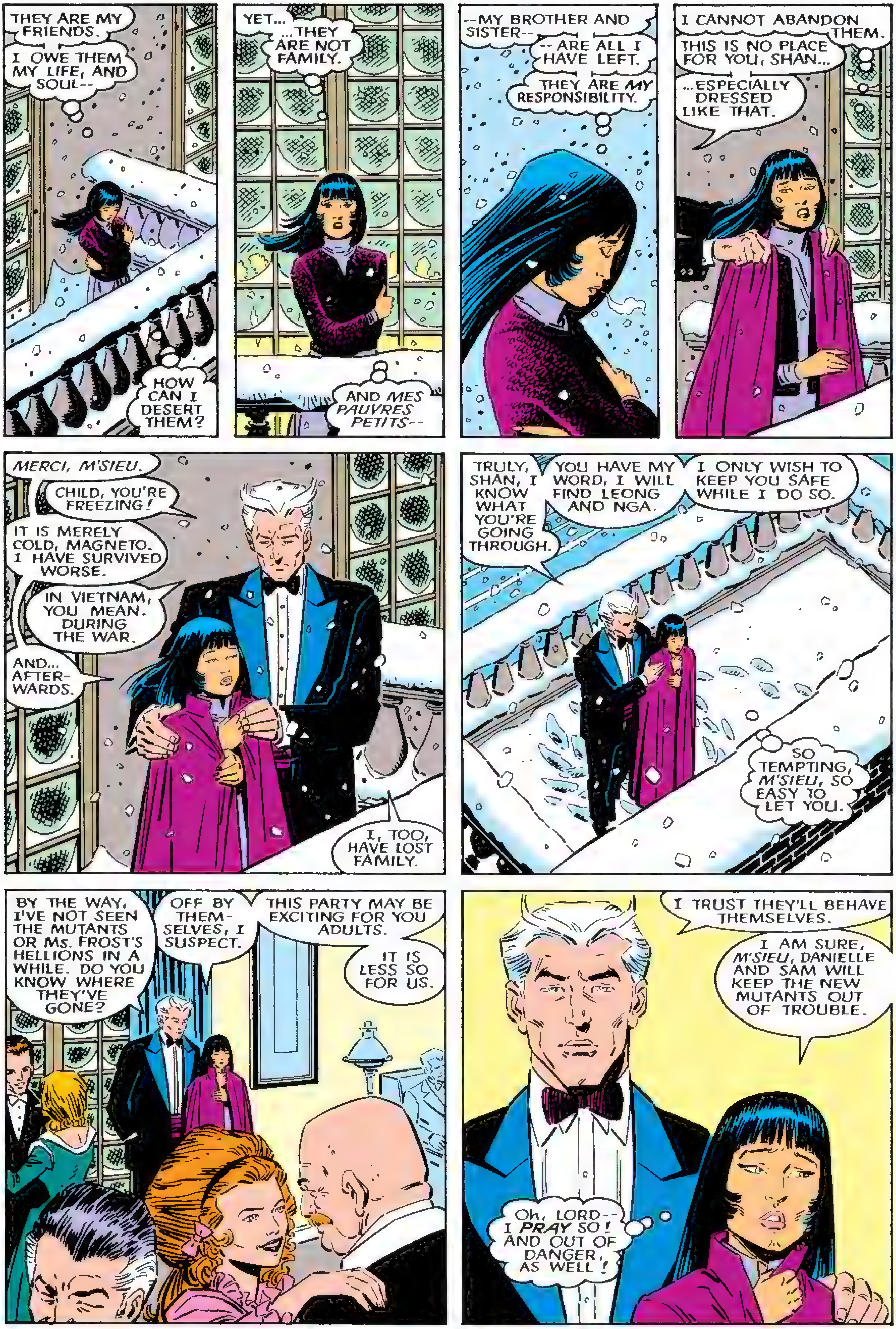

YO, BUNKIE-- HOW'S ABOUT I TELEPORT YOU TO LIMBO--
-- AND WHIP UP A SPELL TO CURE YOU?
Uh... uh... uh...
...URRRRPGKH!
NICE NOISE.
DOES HE MAKE IT OFTEN?
APPRECIATE YOUR OFFER, ILLYANA...
...BUT ON THIS OCCASION, AH FIGURE THE HARD WAY'S BETTER.
HE'LL REMEMBER THE EXPERIENCE A WHOLE LOT MORE STRONGLY...
...AN' MAYBE THINK TWICE THE NEXT TIME HE'S TEMPTED.
DID THE TRICK WITH ME, WHEN MY DADDY PULLED IT.
BODY'S A WONDROUS MACHINE, DOUGLAS...
BLURGHH
... BUT YOU ABUSE IT...
...AN' IT'LL MAKE YOU PAY!
SERVES THE LITTLE TWERP RIGHT...
...SINCE THIS DISASTER IS MOSTLY HIS FAULT.
AIYAAEE--
WATER-- HOT-- CAN'T STAND IT-- NO MORE-- STOP, SAM, PLEASE STOP!
RELAX, KIDDO-- BE ICE COLD IN A MINUTE.
ARRGH!
WE CAN STILL BACK DOWN, CHIEF--
-- EAT SOME CROW AN' CALL THINGS QUITS...
...'FORE THEY GET ANYMORE OUTTA HAND!

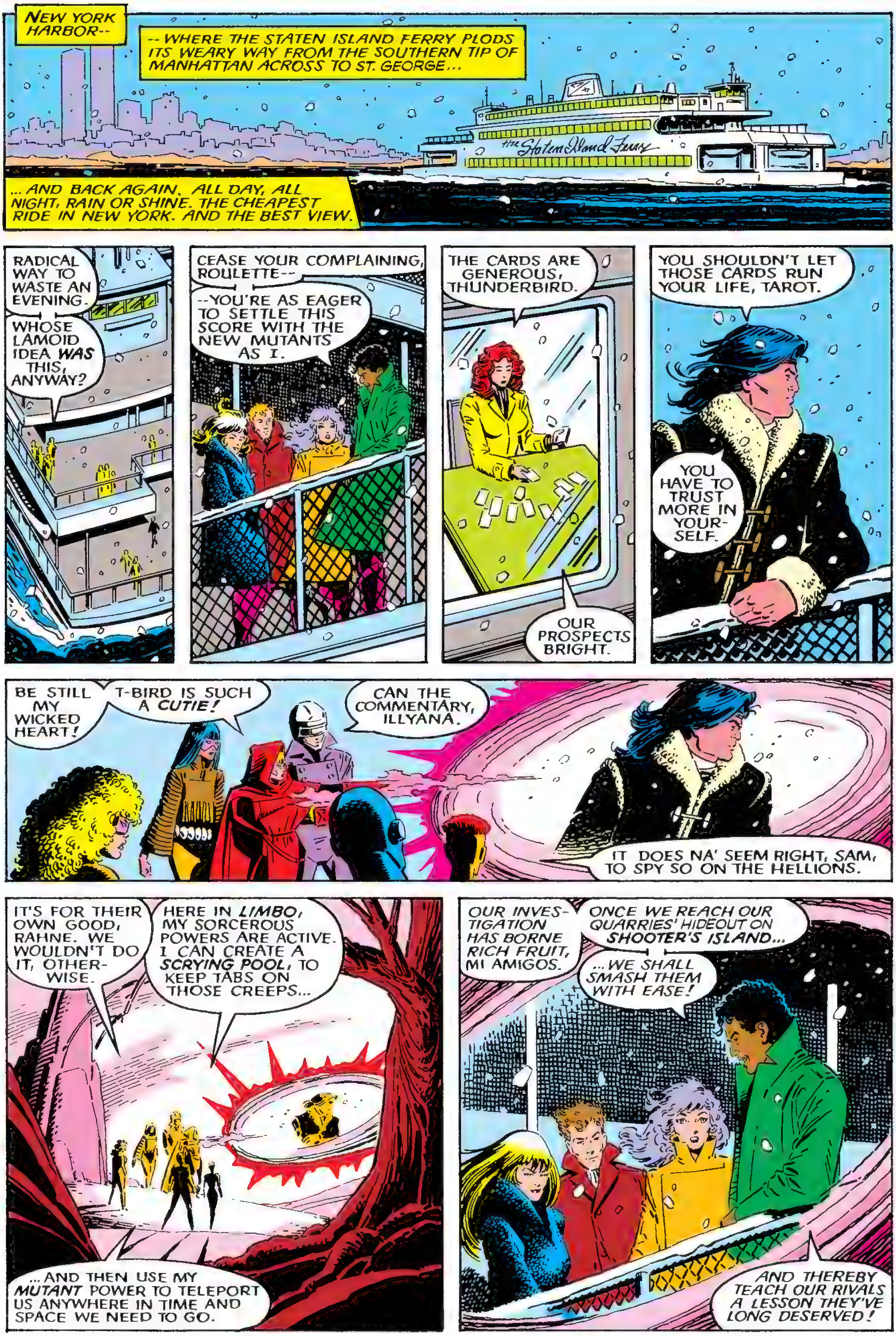

NO, CANNONBALL!
THE HELLIONS HAVE INSULTED US; ARE WE TO LET THAT PASS UNANSWERED?!
OUR PRIDE HAS BEEN **EARNED**, MY FRIENDS-- PAID FOR WITH SWEAT, AND NO LITTLE BLOOD-- IT IS NOT A THING **MAGMA** WOULD LIGHTLY CAST ASIDE.
ESPECIALLY WITH THE HONOR OF A COMRADE AT STAKE.
EVEN ONE WHO'S ACTED LIKE A ROYAL BUTTHEAD.
WHAT THE HECK-- MAGNETO'S ALREADY GROUNDED US FOREVER, WHAT MORE CAN HE DO?
I'D RATHER NOT FIND OUT.
RATIONALLY, I KNOW WE'RE MAKING A MISTAKE...
...BUT THE IDEA OF WIMPING OUT IN FRONT OF THOSE SLEAZEBAG HELLIONS...
...MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL.
AMY, THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO DO IT FOR REAL. TURN DOWN THE HEAT, OKAY?
AS YOU WISH.
LOSING, I CAN LIVE WITH.
BUT NOT GIVING UP BEFORE WE START.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, CHIEF!
ILLYANA-- THESE ARE OUR GRADUATION COSTUMES?!!
I FIGURED, SINCE WE WERE GOING TO BE BREAKING SCHOOL RULES, IT'D BE SMARTER NOT TO WEAR OUR REGULAR SCHOOL UNIFORMS.
MAGNETO ONLY SAW THESE ONCE, HE MAY NOT REMEMBER THEM.
OCH-- HE REMEMBERS ***EVERYTHING!***
ALSO-- OUR NORMAL COSTUMES DON'T HAVE MASKS. THESE DO.

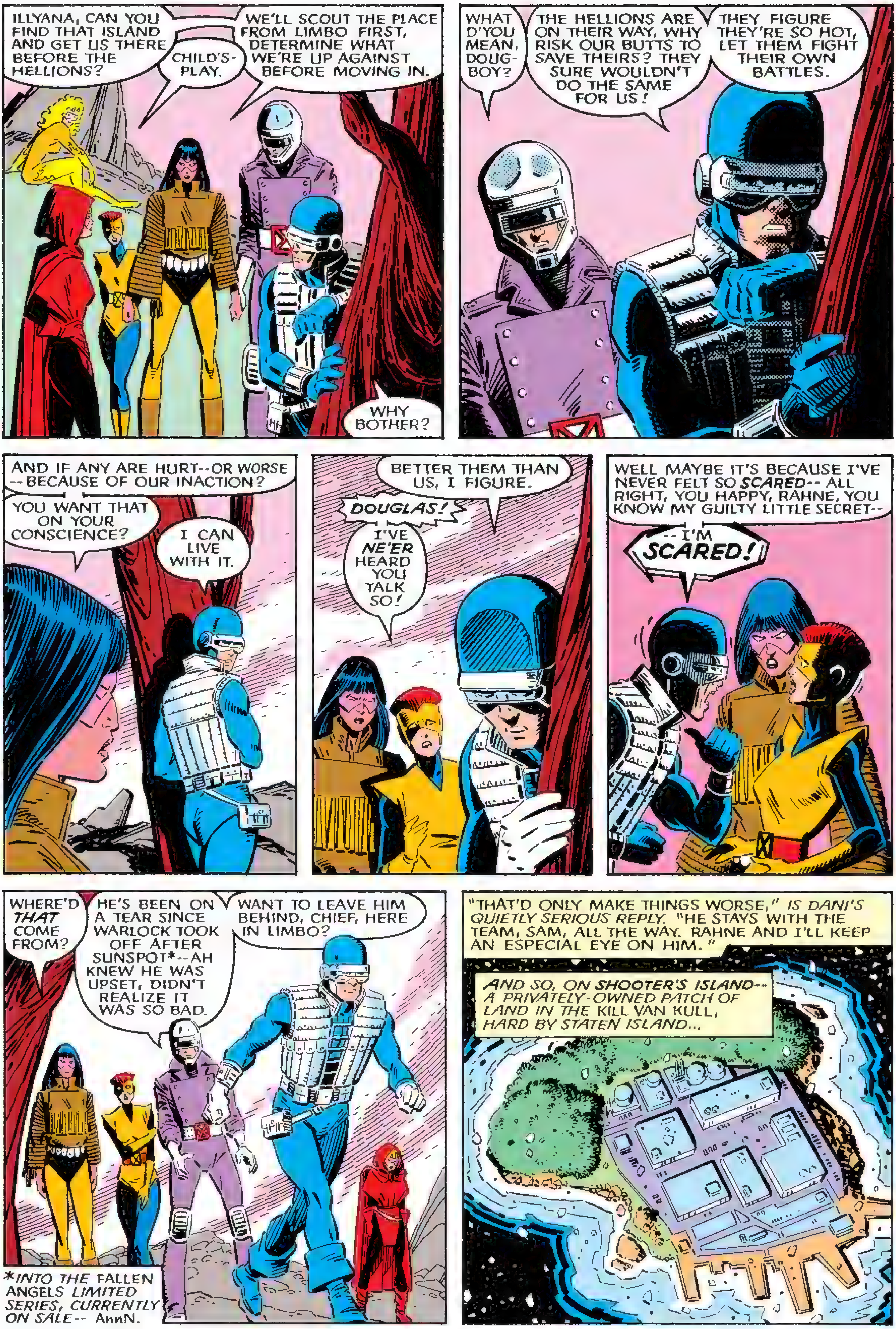

BETTER TO HIDE OUR FACES AND IDENTITIES IN PUBLIC, DON'T'CHA THINK?
TERRIFFIC. THESE WERE MEANT TO SIGNIFY OUR MATURITY-- AS INDIVIDUALS AND A TEAM.
INSTEAD, WE'LL USE 'EM TO PROVE THE REVERSE--
--HOW CHILDISHLY IRRESPONSIBLE WE CAN BE.
HERE'S YOURS, SAM. AND DOUG'S.
WE'LL SWITCH IN THE BATHROOM, DANI.
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I'M CO-LEADER OF THE MUTANTS, SAME AS YOU. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS IS MINE, TOO. WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER, CHIEF-- ALL THE WAY.
I'M GRATEFUL, SAM.
LET'S HOPE...
...THIS WON'T COME...
...TO ANYTHING BAD.
HERE, WOLFSBANE.
IT'S A CHUNK OF THE STATUETTE.
SHIFT TO WOLFEN AND GIVE IT A LOOK-SEE.
AYE, MIRAGE-- I SHALL.
AND, WITH THAT, THE YOUNGEST NEW MUTANT RESHAPES HER FLESH...
...INTO ITS HALF-HUMAN, HALF-WOLF TRANSITIONAL FORM, BLENDING THE BEST ATTRIBUTES OF BOTH SPECIES.
THERE IS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO AMARA.
COULD IT BE TRUE, WHAT THE BLACK QUEEN SAID, THAT SHE AN' AMARA ARE RELATED?!
POOR LASS-- POOR AMY-- THAT'D BE AWFUL!
IN THIS INCARNATION, RAHNE'S SENSES BECOME FANTASTICALLY KEEN--
--SIGHT SO SENSITIVE SHE CAN PERCEIVE PATTERNS OF HEAT, SMELL SO SHARP SHE CAN FOLLOW THE FAINTEST OF TRAILS, EVEN THROUGH THE HEART OF THE CITY.

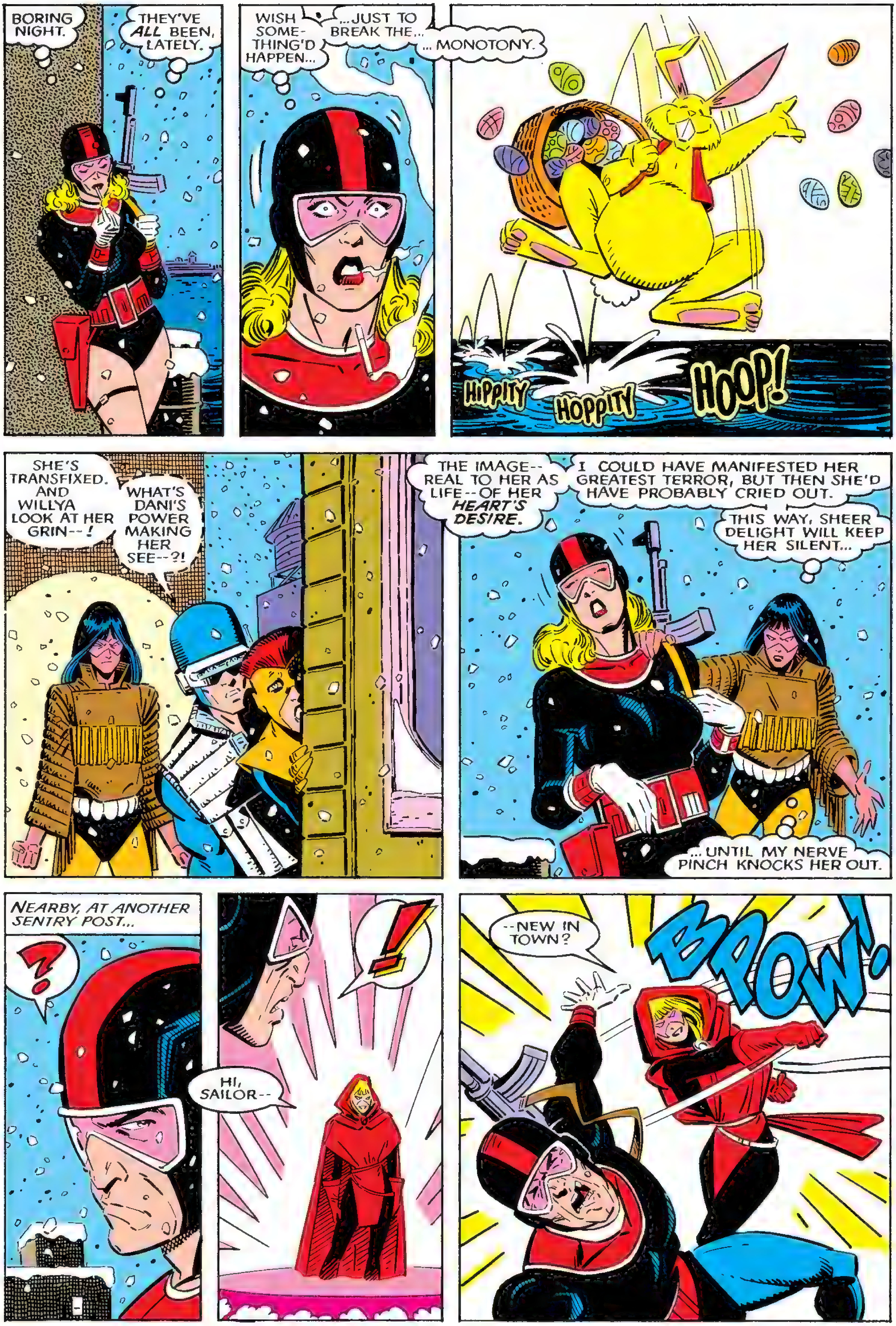

MES AMIS--
--I WAS TOLD YOU WISHED TO--
--QUOI?!?
WHAT IS THIS?!!?
A CAPER, KARMA.
US AGAINST THE HELLIONS.
HERE'S YOUR COSTUME, SHAN.
WE'LL BOOGIE, SOON AS YOU'RE DRESSED.
THIS IS A TEAM EFFORT--YOU'RE PART OF THE TEAM--YOU CAN'T PUNK OUT ON US!
NON, ILLYANA.
I AM NOT GOING.
I HAVE OTHER--MORE IMPORTANT--PRIORITIES.
I WILL NOT BETRAY YOU TO MAGNETO...
...BUT I CANNOT ACCOMPANY YOU. MY HEART WOULD NOT BE IN IT.
I CONFESS, MY HEART HAS NOT BEEN WITH THE TEAM...
...SINCE MY BROTHER AND SISTER WERE KIDNAPED.
I UNDERSTAND, SHAN. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
BUT WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?
I... AM NOT YET SURE.
WHATEVER YOU DECIDE-- OUR HEARTS ARE WITH YOU. ALWAYS!

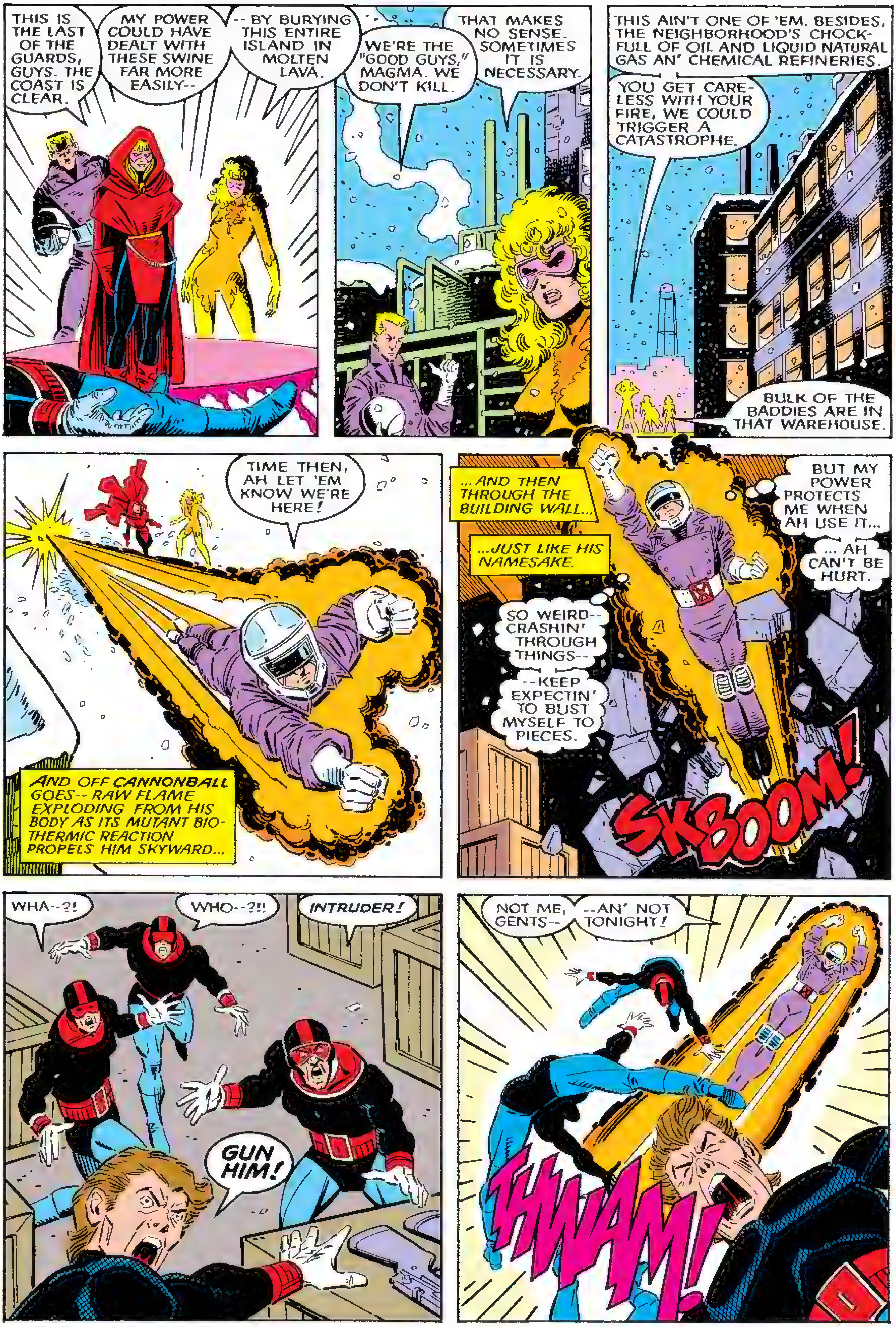

ACROSS FIFTH AVENUE, IN CENTRAL PARK, AFTER SNEAKING OUT OF THE CLUB...
Y'KNOW, THIS CLEARING IS WHERE WE ARRIVED...
... A FEW HOURS AGO...
...WHEN I TELEPORTED US TO THE PARTY.
I WILL GLOW NOW AS I DID THEN, MY FRIENDS...
...TO KEEP US WARM.
THANKS, MAGMA.
WHEN THIS CAPER'S DONE...
...SOMEONE REMIND ME TO ADD SOME *PANTS* TO MY OUTFIT.
MY LEGS ARE *FREEZING!*
FOUND ANYTHING...
...RAHEYYY!?!
NO NO NO NO NO
WHAT THE *HECK--?!*
YOU OKAY, FURTOP?! YOU SOUNDED TERRIFIED!
I *WUH*-- I WAS--
--WITH GOOD REASON!
THE HELLFIRE GENTLEMAN RECEIVED HIS STATUE HERE...
...AN' I RECOGNIZE THE SCENTS OF THOSE WHO GAVE IT TO HIM!
DANI-- IT WAS THE *SILVER SAMURAI*...
...AND *VIPER!*

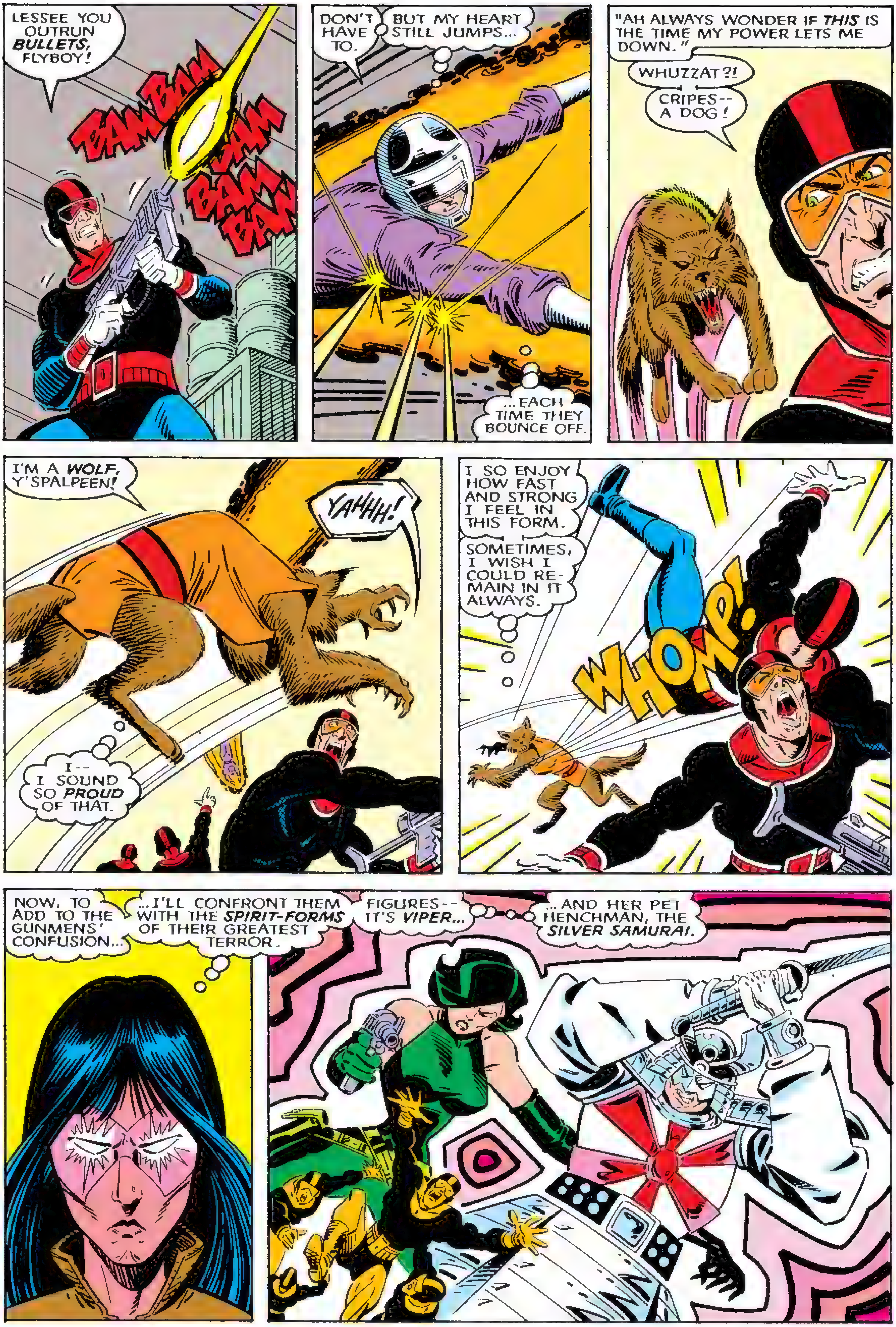

THEY ARE MY FRIENDS.
I OWE THEM MY LIFE, AND SOUL--
HOW CAN I DESERT THEM?
YET...
...THEY ARE NOT FAMILY.
AND *MES PAUVRES PETITS*--
--MY BROTHER AND SISTER--
--ARE ALL I HAVE LEFT.
THEY ARE *MY* RESPONSIBILITY.
I CANNOT ABANDON THEM.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR YOU, SHAN...
...ESPECIALLY DRESSED LIKE THAT.
MERCI, M'SIEU.
CHILD, YOU'RE FREEZING!
IT IS MERELY COLD, MAGNETO. I HAVE SURVIVED WORSE.
IN VIETNAM, YOU MEAN. DURING THE WAR.
AND... AFTERWARDS.
I, TOO, HAVE LOST FAMILY.
TRULY, SHAN, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.
YOU HAVE MY WORD, I WILL FIND LEONG AND NGA.
I ONLY WISH TO KEEP YOU SAFE WHILE I DO SO.
SO TEMPTING, *M'SIEU*, SO EASY TO LET YOU.
BY THE WAY, I'VE NOT SEEN THE MUTANTS OR Ms. FROST'S HELLIONS IN A WHILE. DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY'VE GONE?
OFF BY THEMSELVES, I SUSPECT.
THIS PARTY MAY BE EXCITING FOR YOU ADULTS.
IT IS LESS SO FOR US.
I TRUST THEY'LL BEHAVE THEMSELVES.
I AM SURE, *M'SIEU*, DANIELLE AND SAM WILL KEEP THE NEW MUTANTS OUT OF TROUBLE.
Oh, LORD-- I *PRAY* SO! AND OUT OF DANGER, AS WELL!

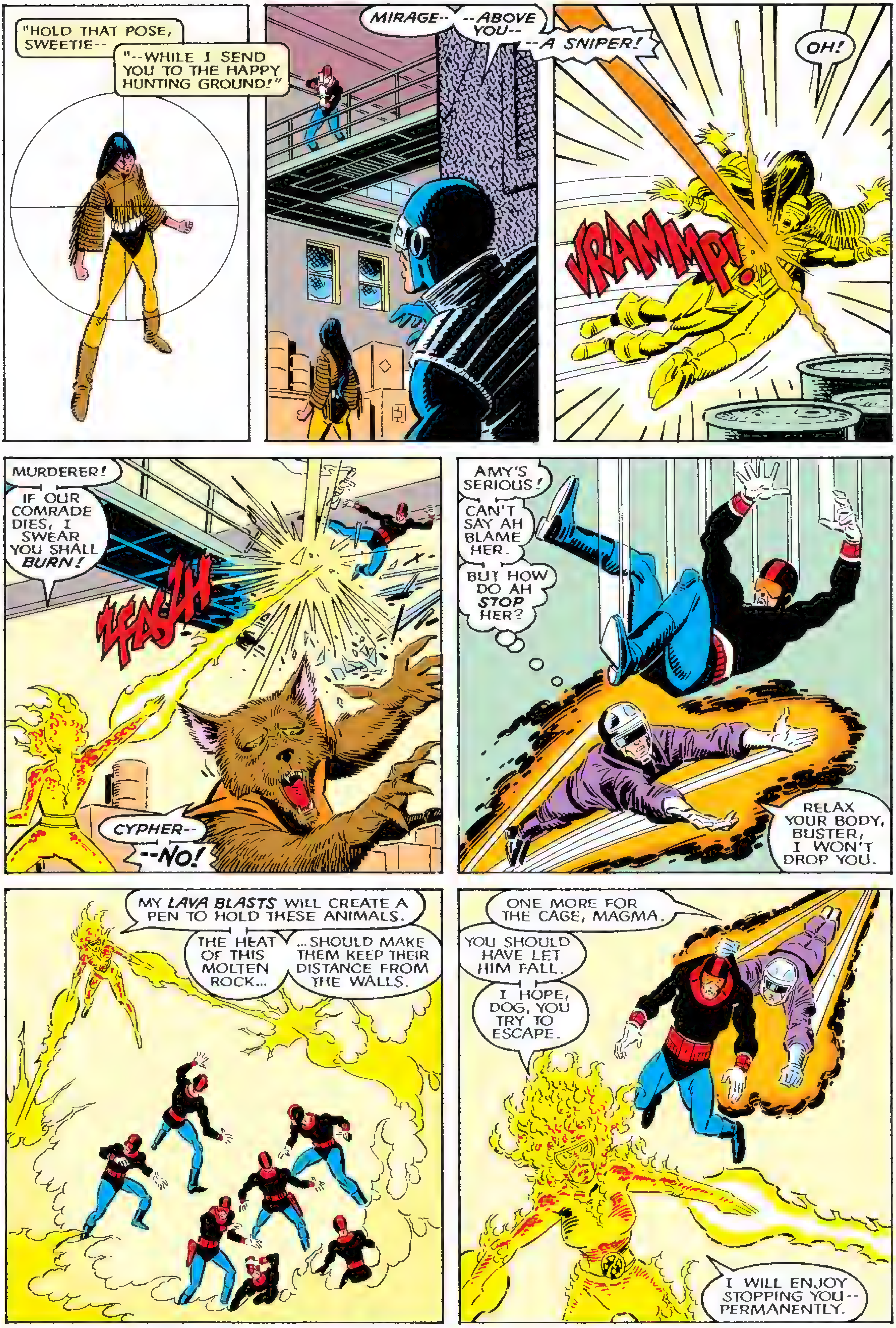

NEW YORK HARBOR--
-- WHERE THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY PLODS ITS WEARY WAY FROM THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTAN ACROSS TO ST. GEORGE...
the Staten Island Ferry
... AND BACK AGAIN. ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT, RAIN OR SHINE. THE CHEAPEST RIDE IN NEW YORK. AND THE BEST VIEW.
RADICAL WAY TO WASTE AN EVENING.
WHOSE LAMOID IDEA *WAS* THIS, ANYWAY?
CEASE YOUR COMPLAINING, ROULETTE--
--YOU'RE AS EAGER TO SETTLE THIS SCORE WITH THE NEW MUTANTS AS I.
THE CARDS ARE GENEROUS, THUNDERBIRD.
OUR PROSPECTS BRIGHT.
YOU SHOULDN'T LET THOSE CARDS RUN YOUR LIFE, TAROT.
YOU HAVE TO TRUST MORE IN YOURSELF.
BE STILL MY WICKED HEART!
T-BIRD IS SUCH A *CUTIE!*
CAN THE COMMENTARY, ILLYANA.
IT DOES NA' SEEM RIGHT, SAM, TO SPY SO ON THE HELLIONS.
IT'S FOR THEIR OWN GOOD, RAHNE. WE WOULDN'T DO IT, OTHERWISE.
HERE IN *LIMBO,* MY SORCEROUS POWERS ARE ACTIVE. I CAN CREATE A *SCRYING POOL,* TO KEEP TABS ON THOSE CREEPS...
... AND THEN USE MY *MUTANT* POWER TO TELEPORT US ANYWHERE IN TIME AND SPACE WE NEED TO GO.
OUR INVESTIGATION HAS BORNE RICH FRUIT, MI AMIGOS.
ONCE WE REACH OUR QUARRIES' HIDEOUT ON *SHOOTER'S ISLAND...*
... WE SHALL SMASH THEM WITH EASE!
AND THEREBY TEACH OUR RIVALS A LESSON THEY'VE LONG DESERVED!

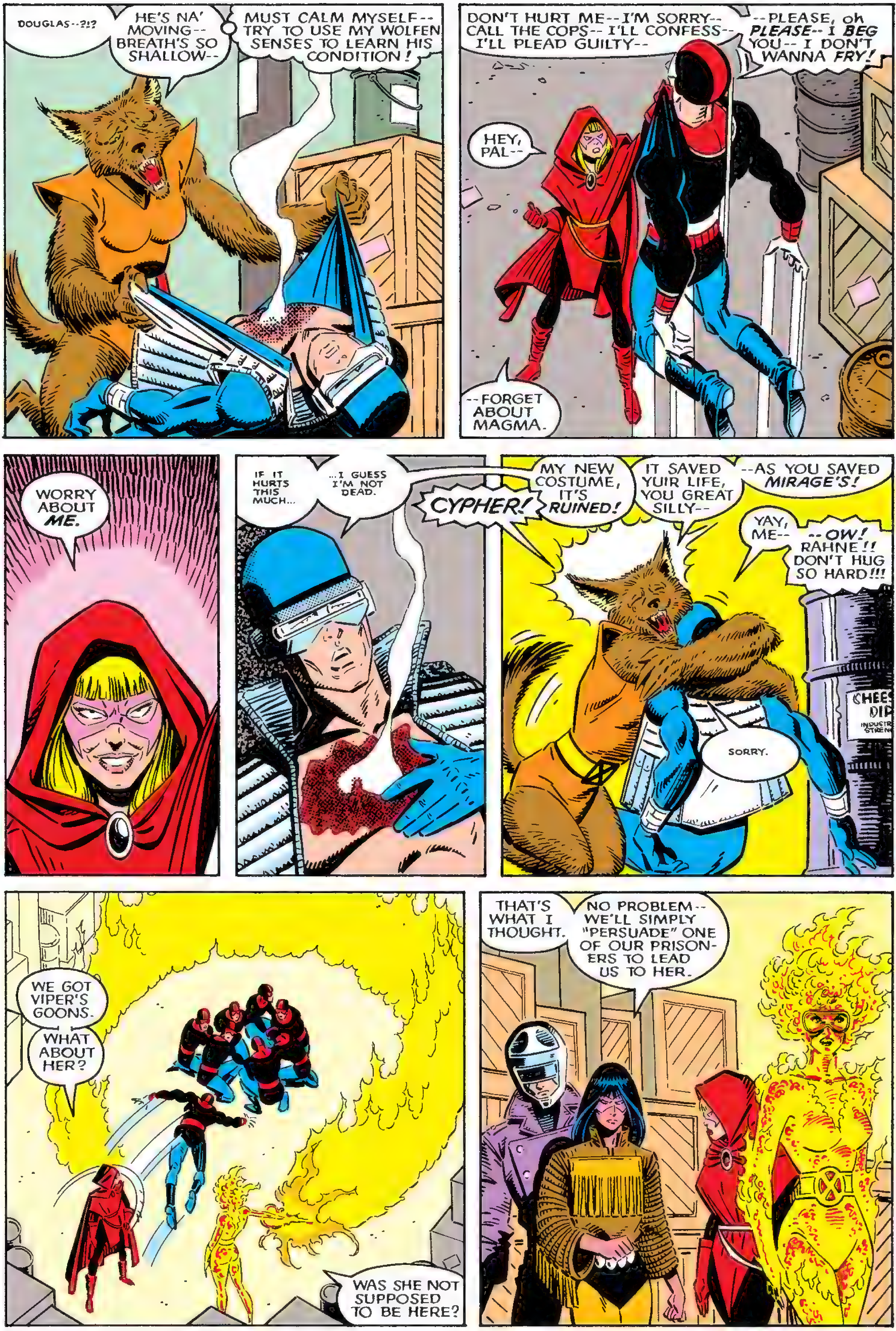

ILLYANA, CAN YOU FIND THAT ISLAND AND GET US THERE BEFORE THE HELLIONS?
CHILD'S-PLAY.
WE'LL SCOUT THE PLACE FROM LIMBO FIRST, DETERMINE WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST BEFORE MOVING IN.
WHY BOTHER?
WHAT D'YOU MEAN, DOUG-BOY?
THE HELLIONS ARE ON THEIR WAY, WHY RISK OUR BUTTS TO SAVE THEIRS? THEY SURE WOULDN'T DO THE SAME FOR US!
THEY FIGURE THEY'RE SO HOT, LET THEM FIGHT THEIR OWN BATTLES.
AND IF ANY ARE HURT--OR WORSE--BECAUSE OF OUR INACTION?
YOU WANT THAT ON YOUR CONSCIENCE?
I CAN LIVE WITH IT.
BETTER THEM THAN US, I FIGURE.
DOUGLAS!
I'VE NE'ER HEARD YOU TALK SO!
WELL MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'VE NEVER FELT SO SCARED-- ALL RIGHT, YOU HAPPY, RAHNE, YOU KNOW MY GUILTY LITTLE SECRET--
--I'M SCARED!
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
HE'S BEEN ON A TEAR SINCE WARLOCK TOOK OFF AFTER SUNSPOT*--AH KNEW HE WAS UPSET, DIDN'T REALIZE IT WAS SO BAD.
WANT TO LEAVE HIM BEHIND, CHIEF, HERE IN LIMBO?
*INTO THE FALLEN ANGELS LIMITED SERIES, CURRENTLY ON SALE-- AnnN.
"THAT'D ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE," IS DANI'S QUIETLY SERIOUS REPLY. "HE STAYS WITH THE TEAM, SAM, ALL THE WAY. RAHNE AND I'LL KEEP AN ESPECIAL EYE ON HIM."
AND SO, ON SHOOTER'S ISLAND-- A PRIVATELY-OWNED PATCH OF LAND IN THE KILL VAN KULL, HARD BY STATEN ISLAND...

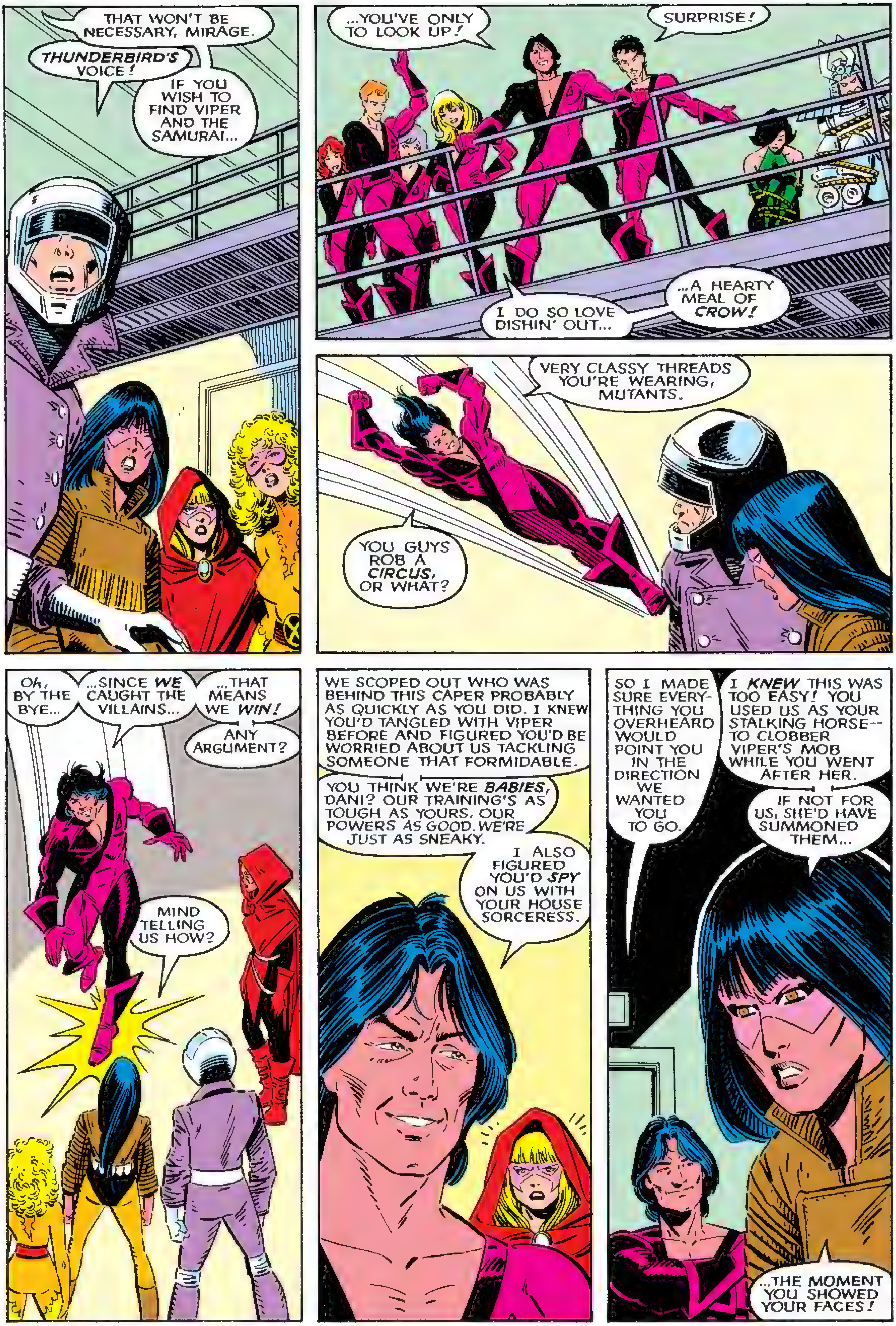

BORING NIGHT.
THEY'VE *ALL* BEEN, LATELY.
WISH SOME-THING'D HAPPEN...
...JUST TO BREAK THE...
... MONOTONY.
HIPPITY
HOPPITY
HOOP!
SHE'S TRANSFIXED. AND WILLYA LOOK AT HER GRIN--!
WHAT'S DANI'S POWER MAKING HER SEE--?!
THE IMAGE--REAL TO HER AS LIFE--OF HER *HEART'S DESIRE.*
I COULD HAVE MANIFESTED HER GREATEST TERROR, BUT THEN SHE'D HAVE PROBABLY CRIED OUT.
THIS WAY, SHEER DELIGHT WILL KEEP HER SILENT...
... UNTIL MY NERVE PINCH KNOCKS HER OUT.
NEARBY, AT ANOTHER SENTRY POST...
?
!
HI, SAILOR--
--NEW IN TOWN?
BPOW!

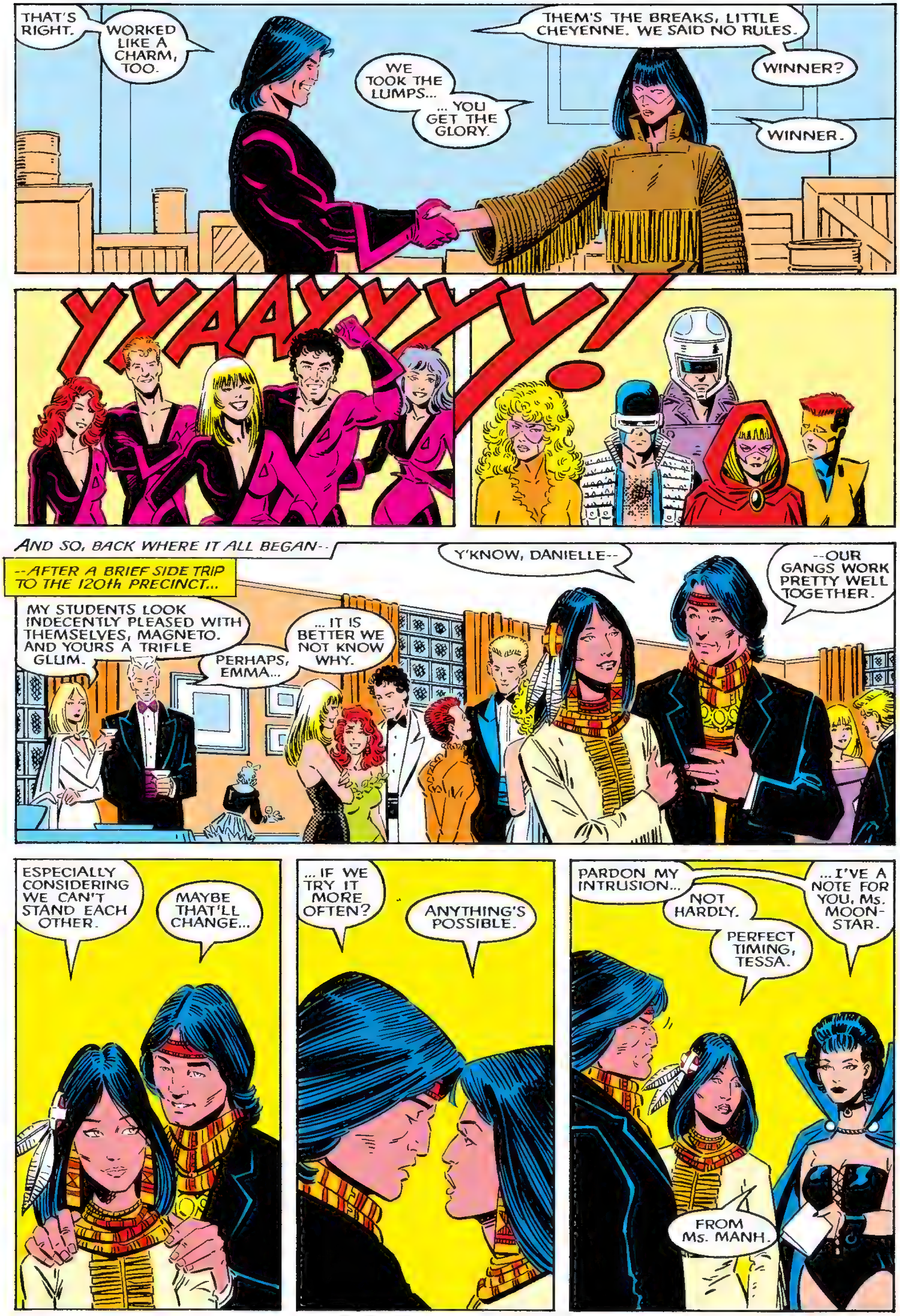

THIS IS THE LAST OF THE GUARDS, GUYS. THE COAST IS CLEAR.
MY POWER COULD HAVE DEALT WITH THESE SWINE FAR MORE EASILY--
-- BY BURYING THIS ENTIRE ISLAND IN MOLTEN LAVA.
WE'RE THE "GOOD GUYS," MAGMA. WE DON'T KILL.
THAT MAKES NO SENSE. SOMETIMES IT IS NECESSARY.
THIS AIN'T ONE OF 'EM. BESIDES, THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S CHOCK-FULL OF OIL AND LIQUID NATURAL GAS AN' CHEMICAL REFINERIES.
YOU GET CARELESS WITH YOUR FIRE, WE COULD TRIGGER A CATASTROPHE.
BULK OF THE BADDIES ARE IN THAT WAREHOUSE.
TIME THEN, AH LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE HERE!
AND OFF CANNONBALL GOES-- RAW FLAME EXPLODING FROM HIS BODY AS ITS MUTANT BIO-THERMIC REACTION PROPELS HIM SKYWARD...
...AND THEN THROUGH THE BUILDING WALL...
...JUST LIKE HIS NAMESAKE.
BUT MY POWER PROTECTS ME WHEN AH USE IT...
... AH CAN'T BE HURT.
SO WEIRD-- CRASHIN' THROUGH THINGS--
--KEEP EXPECTIN' TO BUST MYSELF TO PIECES.
SKBOOM!
WHA--?!
WHO--?!!
INTRUDER!
GUN HIM!
NOT ME, GENTS--
--AN' NOT TONIGHT!
THWAM!

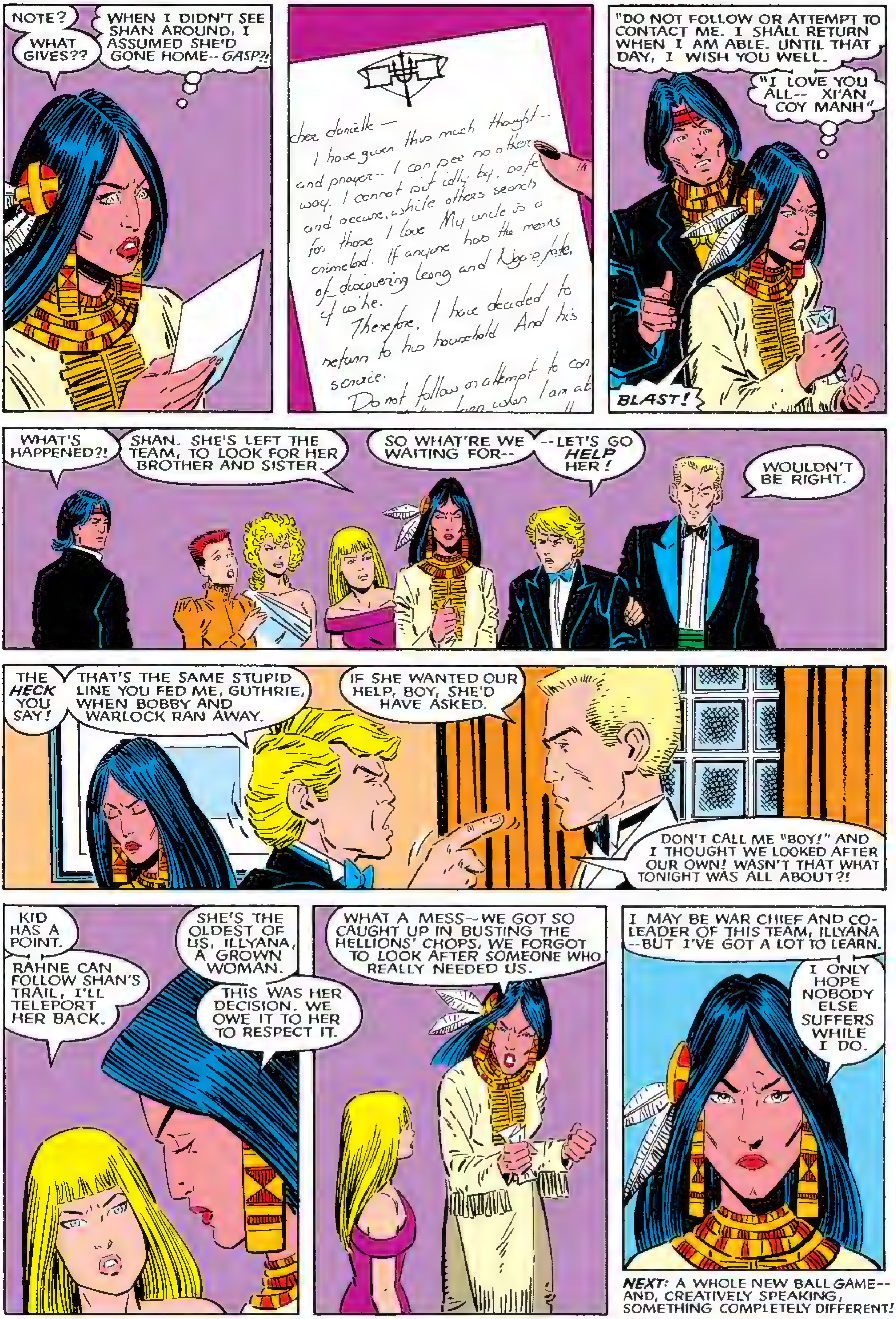

LESSEE YOU OUTRUN **BULLETS,** FLYBOY!
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM
DON'T HAVE TO.
BUT MY HEART STILL JUMPS...
...EACH TIME THEY BOUNCE OFF.
"AH ALWAYS WONDER IF *THIS* IS THE TIME MY POWER LETS ME DOWN."
WHUZZAT?!
CRIPES-- A DOG!
I'M A *WOLF,* Y'SPALPEEN!
YAHHH!
I-- I SOUND SO *PROUD* OF THAT.
I SO ENJOY HOW FAST AND STRONG I FEEL IN THIS FORM.
SOMETIMES, I WISH I COULD REMAIN IN IT ALWAYS.
WHOMP!
NOW, TO ADD TO THE GUNMENS' CONFUSION...
...I'LL CONFRONT THEM WITH THE *SPIRIT-FORMS* OF THEIR GREATEST TERROR.
FIGURES-- IT'S *VIPER...*
...AND HER PET HENCHMAN, THE *SILVER SAMURAI.*


"HOLD THAT POSE, SWEETIE--
"--WHILE I SEND YOU TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND!"
MIRAGE--
--ABOVE YOU--
--A SNIPER!
OH!
VRAMMP!
MURDERER!
IF OUR COMRADE DIES, I SWEAR YOU SHALL *BURN!*
ZFASH
CYPHER--
--NO!
AMY'S SERIOUS!
CAN'T SAY AH BLAME HER.
BUT HOW DO AH *STOP* HER?
RELAX YOUR BODY, BUSTER, I WON'T DROP YOU.
MY *LAVA BLASTS* WILL CREATE A PEN TO HOLD THESE ANIMALS.
THE HEAT OF THIS MOLTEN ROCK...
...SHOULD MAKE THEM KEEP THEIR DISTANCE FROM THE WALLS.
ONE MORE FOR THE CAGE, MAGMA.
YOU SHOULD HAVE LET HIM FALL.
I HOPE, DOG, YOU TRY TO ESCAPE.
I WILL ENJOY STOPPING YOU--PERMANENTLY.


DOUGLAS--?!?
HE'S NA' MOVING-- BREATH'S SO SHALLOW--
MUST CALM MYSELF-- TRY TO USE MY WOLFEN SENSES TO LEARN HIS CONDITION!
DON'T HURT ME--I'M SORRY-- CALL THE COPS-- I'LL CONFESS-- I'LL PLEAD GUILTY--
--PLEASE, oh *PLEASE*-- I *BEG* YOU-- I DON'T WANNA *FRY!*
HEY, PAL--
--FORGET ABOUT MAGMA.
WORRY ABOUT *ME.*
IF IT HURTS THIS MUCH...
...I GUESS I'M NOT DEAD.
CYPHER!
MY NEW COSTUME, IT'S *RUINED!*
IT SAVED YUIR LIFE, YOU GREAT SILLY--
--AS YOU SAVED *MIRAGE'S!*
YAY, ME--
--OW! RAHNE!! DON'T HUG SO HARD!!!
SORRY.
CHEES DIP
WE GOT VIPER'S GOONS.
WHAT ABOUT HER?
WAS SHE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
NO PROBLEM-- WE'LL SIMPLY "PERSUADE" ONE OF OUR PRISONERS TO LEAD US TO HER.


THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, MIRAGE.
THUNDERBIRD'S VOICE!
IF YOU WISH TO FIND VIPER AND THE SAMURAI...
...YOU'VE ONLY TO LOOK UP!
SURPRISE!
I DO SO LOVE DISHIN' OUT...
...A HEARTY MEAL OF *CROW!*
VERY CLASSY THREADS YOU'RE WEARING, MUTANTS.
YOU GUYS ROB A *CIRCUS*, OR WHAT?
Oh, BY THE BYE...
...SINCE *WE* CAUGHT THE VILLAINS...
...THAT MEANS WE *WIN!*
ANY ARGUMENT?
MIND TELLING US HOW?
WE SCOPED OUT WHO WAS BEHIND THIS CAPER PROBABLY AS QUICKLY AS YOU DID. I KNEW YOU'D TANGLED WITH VIPER BEFORE AND FIGURED YOU'D BE WORRIED ABOUT US TACKLING SOMEONE THAT FORMIDABLE.
YOU THINK WE'RE *BABIES*, DANI? OUR TRAINING'S AS TOUGH AS YOURS. OUR POWERS AS GOOD. WE'RE JUST AS SNEAKY.
I ALSO FIGURED YOU'D *SPY* ON US WITH YOUR HOUSE SORCERESS.
SO I MADE SURE EVERYTHING YOU OVERHEARD WOULD POINT YOU IN THE DIRECTION WE WANTED YOU TO GO.
I *KNEW* THIS WAS TOO EASY! YOU USED US AS YOUR STALKING HORSE--TO CLOBBER VIPER'S MOB WHILE YOU WENT AFTER HER.
IF NOT FOR US, SHE'D HAVE SUMMONED THEM...
...THE MOMENT YOU SHOWED YOUR FACES!


THAT'S RIGHT.
WORKED LIKE A CHARM, TOO.
WE TOOK THE LUMPS...
... YOU GET THE GLORY.
THEM'S THE BREAKS, LITTLE CHEYENNE. WE SAID NO RULES.
WINNER?
WINNER.
YYAAYYYY!
AND SO, BACK WHERE IT ALL BEGAN--
--AFTER A BRIEF SIDE TRIP TO THE 120th PRECINCT...
MY STUDENTS LOOK INDECENTLY PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES, MAGNETO. AND YOURS A TRIFLE GLUM.
PERHAPS, EMMA...
... IT IS BETTER WE NOT KNOW WHY.
Y'KNOW, DANIELLE--
--OUR GANGS WORK PRETTY WELL TOGETHER.
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING WE CAN'T STAND EACH OTHER.
MAYBE THAT'LL CHANGE...
... IF WE TRY IT MORE OFTEN?
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.
PARDON MY INTRUSION...
... I'VE A NOTE FOR YOU, Ms. MOONSTAR.
NOT HARDLY.
PERFECT TIMING, TESSA.
FROM Ms. MANH.


NOTE? WHAT GIVES??
WHEN I DIDN'T SEE SHAN AROUND, I ASSUMED SHE'D GONE HOME--GASP?!
chère danielle —
I have given this much thought--
and prayer-- I can see no other
way. I cannot sit idly by, safe
and secure, while others search
for those I love My uncle is a
crimelord. If anyone has the means
of discovering Leong and Ngo-e fate,
it is he.
Therefore, I have decided to
return to his household And his
service.
Do not follow or attempt to con
"DO NOT FOLLOW OR ATTEMPT TO CONTACT ME. I SHALL RETURN WHEN I AM ABLE. UNTIL THAT DAY, I WISH YOU WELL.
"I LOVE YOU ALL-- XI'AN COY MANH"
BLAST!
WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
SHAN. SHE'S LEFT THE TEAM, TO LOOK FOR HER BROTHER AND SISTER.
SO WHAT'RE WE WAITING FOR--
--LET'S GO HELP HER!
WOULDN'T BE RIGHT.
THE HECK YOU SAY!
THAT'S THE SAME STUPID LINE YOU FED ME, GUTHRIE, WHEN BOBBY AND WARLOCK RAN AWAY.
IF SHE WANTED OUR HELP, BOY, SHE'D HAVE ASKED.
DON'T CALL ME "BOY!" AND I THOUGHT WE LOOKED AFTER OUR OWN! WASN'T THAT WHAT TONIGHT WAS ALL ABOUT?!
KID HAS A POINT.
RAHNE CAN FOLLOW SHAN'S TRAIL, I'LL TELEPORT HER BACK.
SHE'S THE OLDEST OF US, ILLYANA, A GROWN WOMAN.
THIS WAS HER DECISION. WE OWE IT TO HER TO RESPECT IT.
WHAT A MESS--WE GOT SO CAUGHT UP IN BUSTING THE HELLIONS' CHOPS, WE FORGOT TO LOOK AFTER SOMEONE WHO REALLY NEEDED US.
I MAY BE WAR CHIEF AND CO-LEADER OF THIS TEAM, ILLYANA --BUT I'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN.
I ONLY HOPE NOBODY ELSE SUFFERS WHILE I DO.

NEXT: A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME--AND, CREATIVELY SPEAKING, SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

BLEVINS

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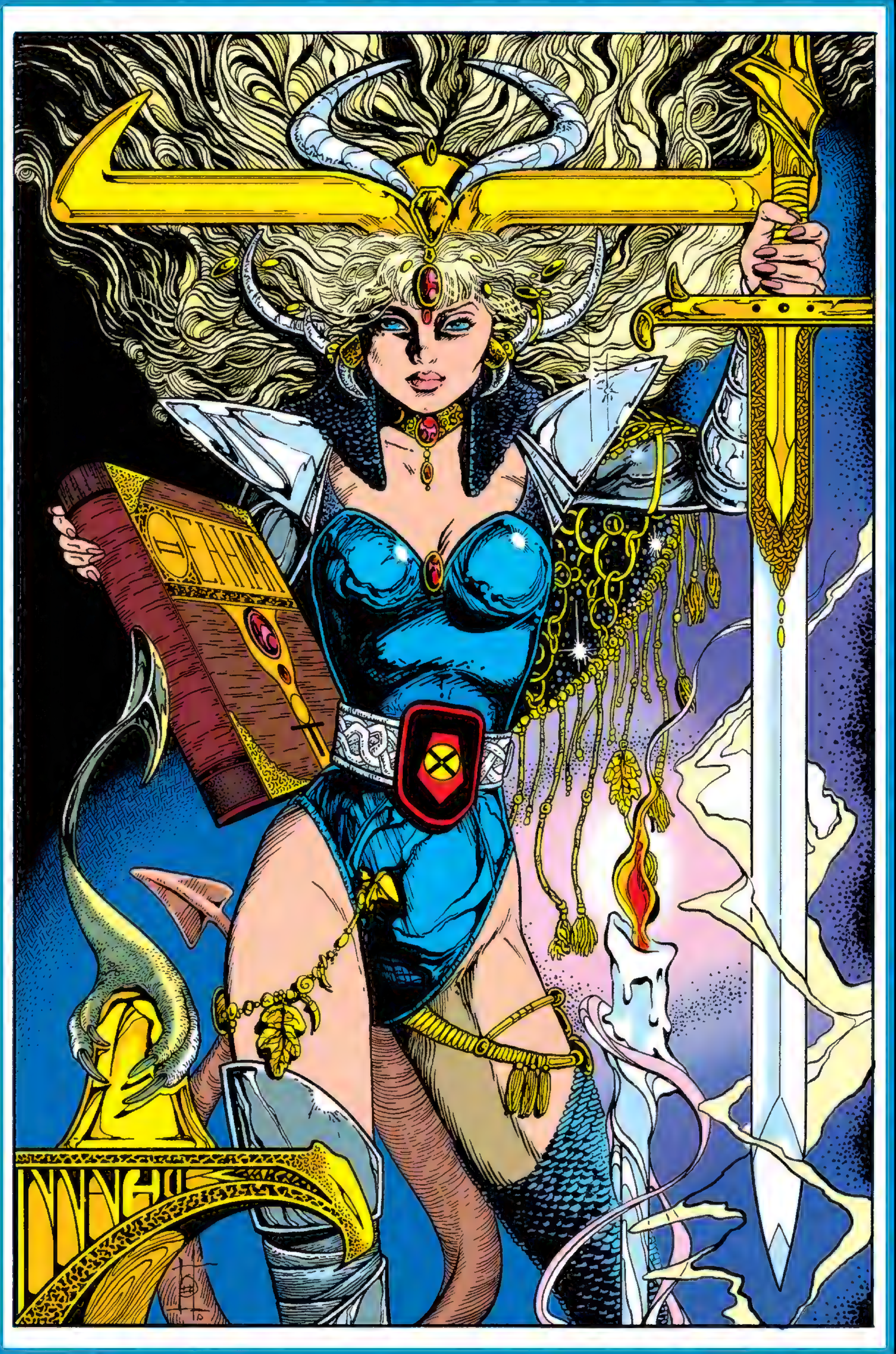

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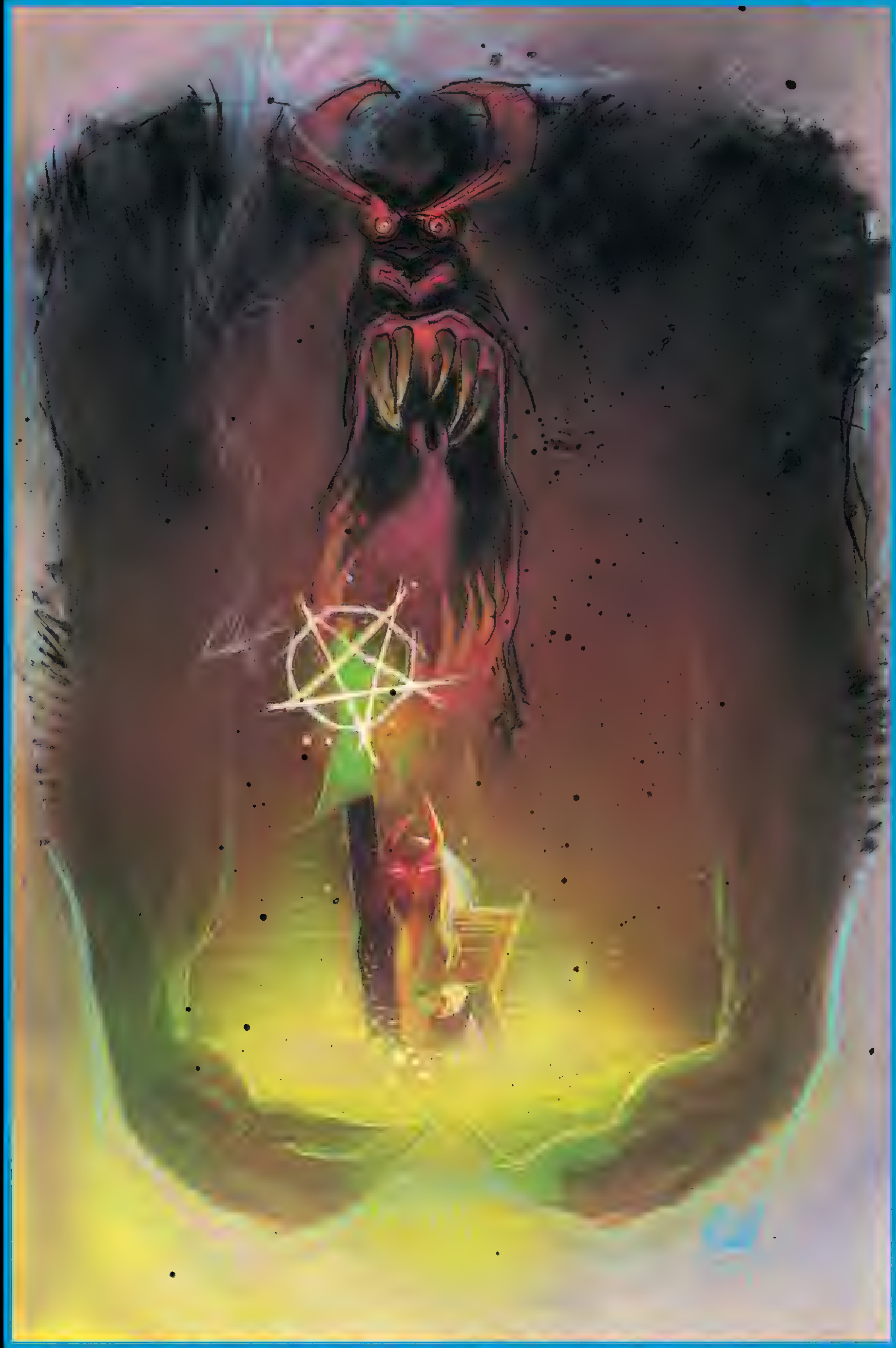

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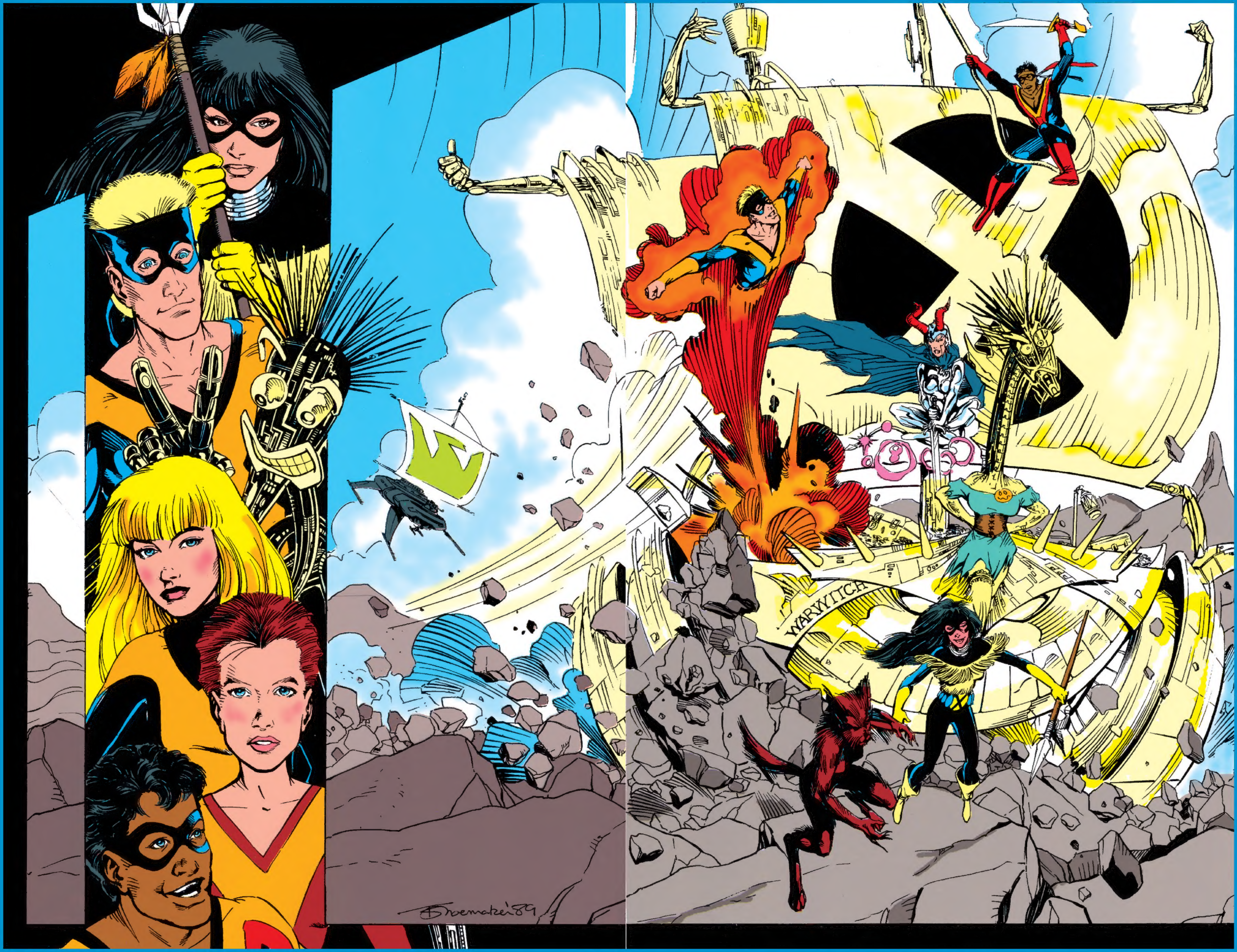
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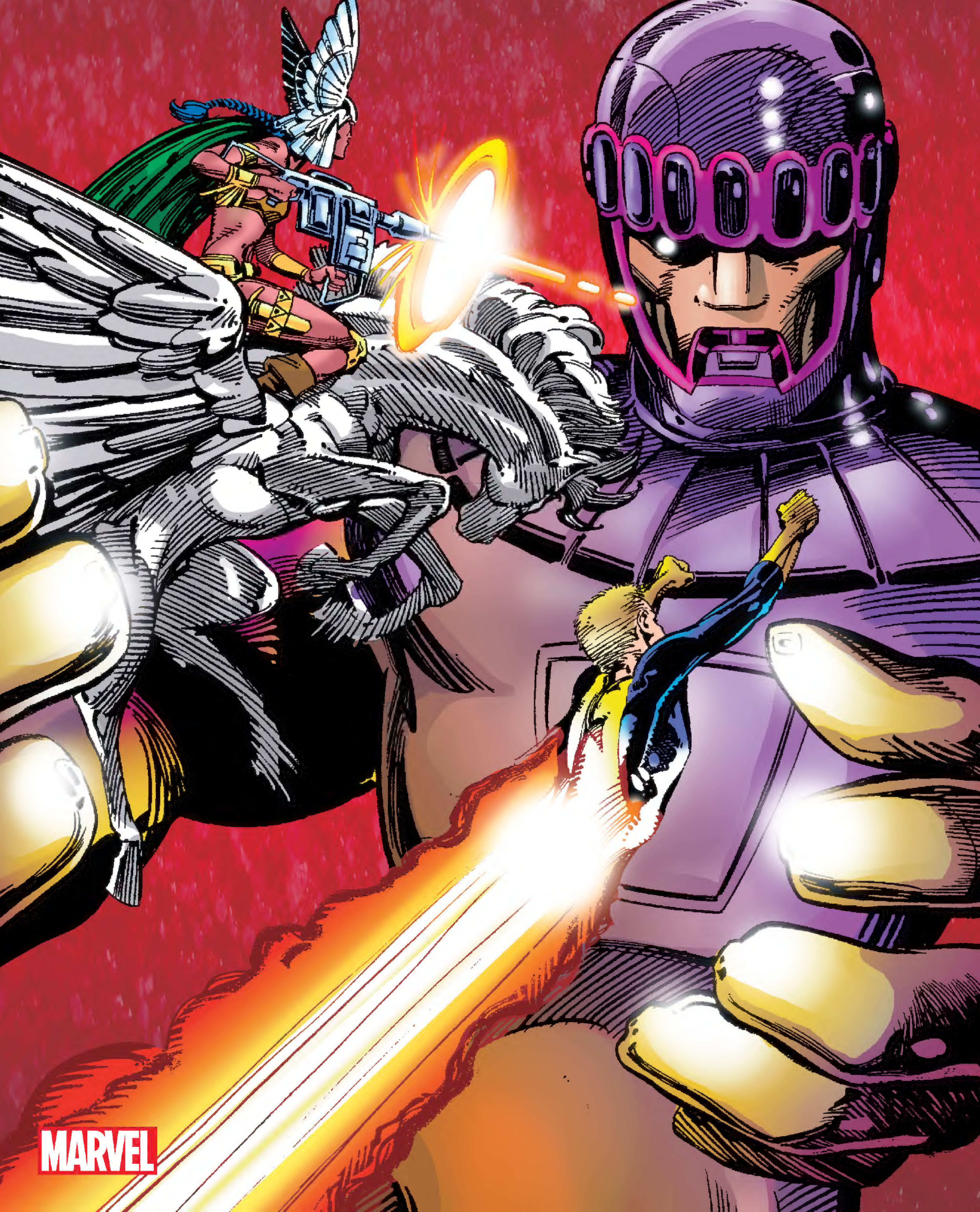

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